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# ALDERSGATE PAPERS

THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL OF  
THE WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL  
CONSORTIUM

Number 4  
SEPTEMBER 2003

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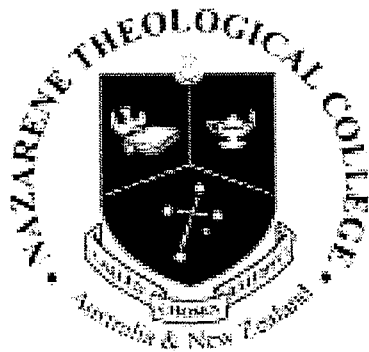
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## Erratum

The large Kingsley logo on the left side of the cover is a printing error and should not have been used as the journal is now a joint publication of Kingsley and Nazarene Theological College under the rubric of the Wesleyan Theological Consortium. Apologies to NTC and to all our readers. The logos as they should have appeared on the cover are shown below. The error will be rectified in the next issue of the journal.

Glen O'Brien, editor.



# ALDERSGATE PAPERS

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The Wesley Tercentenary  
1703-2003

Melbourne

Wesleyan Theological Consortium  
PO Box 125  
Glenroy Vic 3046

The Wesleyan Theological Consortium exists to labour together in the development of Wesleyan theological education, across the denominational spectrum. It is committed to bearing witness to that 'union between vital piety and sound learning' proposed by John Wesley.

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ISBN 1 74018 332 0

BOOKS AND WRITERS NETWORK

Printed in Australia by Fast Books, Watsons Bay

Members and friends of the Wesleyan Theological Consortium met in Sydney on July 4th, 2003 immediately following the 20th Biennial Conference of the South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges. The Birrong Church of the Nazarene kindly hosted the gathering. Member institutions represented were Kingsley College, Melbourne and Nazarene Theological College, Brisbane. Rev. Dr. Alan Harley, of the Salvation Army School of Biblical and General Studies, and founder of Tyndale College, was also present. Fraternal greetings and apologies were sent from the Church of God (Anderson). As well as affirming the importance of the Consortium and the need for developing its activities, a number of important decisions were made including that *Aldersgate Papers*, the theological journal of Kingsley College, should become the journal of the Consortium, costs being shared by member institutions. This volume of the journal, vol. 4, is the first under the new arrangement. Current subscribers will continue to receive their copies without needing to take any action, and for no additional cost.

Apologies for the lateness of this number are in order. The production of a journal of this type too easily becomes one of those important but not 'urgent' items that tends to be relegated to the bottom of the 'to do' pile. The absence of submissions has also been a factor. Now that the journal is shared by the Consortium, it is hoped that more contributors will emerge.

Requests for subscriptions (AUD \$50 for 2 copies) should be addressed to Steve Mitchell PO Box 125 Glenroy VIC 3046 [smitchell@kingsley.vic.edu.au](mailto:smitchell@kingsley.vic.edu.au). Back copies of vol. 3 of the journal are available for \$20 each, payable to Kingsley College.

Submission of papers for publication should be addressed to:  
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Volumes 1-3 of this journal can be viewed on line at [www.kingsley.vic.edu.au/glenobrien/aldersgate.htm](http://www.kingsley.vic.edu.au/glenobrien/aldersgate.htm)

*The Wesleyan Theological Consortium first began meeting in 1999, following each Biennial Conference of the South Pacific Association of Bible College. These meetings arose out of a recognition that Kingsley College ([www.kingsley.vic.edu.au](http://www.kingsley.vic.edu.au)) and Nazarene Theological College ([www.ntc.qld.edu.au](http://www.ntc.qld.edu.au)) have much in common as Wesleyan educational institutions, and that working together wherever possible, rather than duplicating efforts, makes a lot of sense. These times have included formal delivery of academic papers, as well as fellowship and casual conversation around common areas of passionate interest. Wesleyan Methodists in Brisbane are now encouraged to study at the Nazarene Theological College in that city, for a portion of their study programme and Nazarenes in Melbourne are encouraged to study at Kingsley College, for a portion of theirs. This mutual recognition of member schools is a healthy way to co-operate and a sign of the mutual respect we have for each other. When operating extension schools in various locations, both nationally and internationally, members of the Consortium have undertaken to keep each other informed so as not to duplicate our efforts unnecessarily. We also hope to be able to share faculty through the offering of intensives in the future. Membership of the WTC is open to individuals as well as to institutions. Contact Glen O'Brien at the above address if you would like to make a contribution to the expansion of the Consortium through your own, or your institution's, involvement.*

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#### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER OF THE JOURNAL

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**Barry Brown** is a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church of Australia. Ordained by the Methodist Conference at Wesley Church, Melbourne in 1973, he completed his ministerial training at Otira College, Kew, and Queen's College, Melbourne. Barry holds Diplomas in theology and pastoral care from the Melbourne College of Divinity, the Bachelor of Theology from the Sydney College of Divinity, the Doctor of Ministry from San Francisco Theological Seminary, and the Master of Arts from Deakin University. Born of Methodist parents (on his mother's side Bible Christians since the 1870s) Barry has been involved in three World Methodist Conferences (Honolulu 1981, Nairobi Kenya 1986, Brighton UK 2000), has preached in various Methodist churches in the USA and the UK, and held seven pastoral appointments, the longest being at Wesley Church, Melbourne from 1978-1987. He is currently appointed to Croydon Uniting Church, Melbourne.

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**Jonathan P. Case** is lecturer in theology, philosophy, and apologetics at Kingsley College. He is a 1995 graduate of Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota), earning the PhD in systematic theology. An ordained Wesleyan minister, he is interested especially in the interface of theological reflection and the experience of congregations.

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## **THE MINISTRY OF LAY PREACHER: A WESLEYAN HERITAGE<sup>1</sup>**

**Barry Brown**

The ministry of lay preacher is important to the Uniting Church, as it was to its previous traditions, especially the Methodist tradition. I am aware that, in many ways, the role played by lay preachers in the colonial years is being replicated in our time. Especially in rural areas, patterns of ministry that were common in the nineteenth century are being repeated. Lay ministries, including that of lay preacher, are again the primary source of the Church's ministry locally, while ordained ministry is available less often and has a focus mainly on the administration of the sacraments and assisting to equip and support the laity.

I acknowledge that lay ministry was common to all of the uniting churches before union. However, I consider it correct to argue that the role of Lay Preacher in the Uniting Church is largely (although not exclusively) a Methodist heritage. The various branches of Methodism that were established in the Australia colonies during the nineteenth century each depended heavily on their 'local preachers' to pioneer and maintain their many and varied preaching places.

I have titled this paper '*The Ministry of Lay Preacher: A Wesleyan Heritage*' partly because the Wesleyan Methodist Church was the main branch of Methodism immediately following Wesley's death in 1791. However, I more particularly want to acknowledge the significance of John Wesley, and his mother, in the development of this important lay ministry. In this sense the term 'Wesleyan' has a double meaning. It refers both to the Wesleyan Methodist tradition

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<sup>1</sup> This paper contains the essence of an occasional address prepared for the Conference of the Lay Preacher's Association of the Uniting Church in Australia (Victoria and Tasmania) in March 2003 – in honour of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Rev John Wesley AM, (17 June 1703 – old time).

and to two members of the Wesley family – John Wesley and his mother, Susanna Wesley.

It needs to be made clear, however, that I am in no way arguing that lay ministry, or the ministry of lay preacher, is uniquely a Wesleyan heritage. It is not. Indeed, an overview of church history, commencing with the Acts of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, will clearly show that lay ministry and lay preaching have a long history. What I do argue, however, is that the form of the ministry we know as 'lay preacher' in the Uniting Church is more directly linked with the Wesleyan heritage.

### Methodist Local Preachers

This ministry of lay preacher is traced back to the earliest days of Methodism, and its origins are worth recalling. In 1739, not long after John Wesley commenced his field preaching near Bristol, a young man by the name of Thomas Maxfield was converted to Christ and became a committed Methodist. Wesley soon engaged him as a lay assistant and sent him to London. Part of his work was to support new Methodists and the new 'Society' that had been established. His role was to pray with them and assist them to understand the Bible and the disciplines of Methodism. However, Thomas Maxfield sensed a compulsion to preach, and this he did at 'The Foundery' while Wesley was away. On hearing news of this, Wesley returned to London immediately to confront his young assistant.

First, however, he discussed the matter with his mother, Susanna, who to John's great surprise, admitted she had heard Thomas Maxfield preach and considered he was as much called of God for this ministry as her own clerical husband and sons had been. This surprised Wesley even more, but because of his high regard for his mother and her sound theological reflection and wisdom, he chose to listen to Maxwell preach. He soon became convinced his mother was correct in her discernment and resolved to include lay preachers as part of his expanding ministry. Careful, as usual, John prepared a stringent set of rules to govern this new lay ministry. As with much of Wesley's work, this new step had a pragmatic purpose – that many more people would hear the gospel. However, Wesley was able to justify his actions theologically. This he later did in a sermon on 'The Ministerial Office'. The following extract from this sermon is useful to introduce the office of a lay preacher:

Not long after, a young man, Thomas Maxfield, offered himself to serve them as a son in the gospel. And then another, Thomas Richards, and a little after a third, Thomas Westell. Let it be well observed on what terms we received these, viz., as Prophets, not as Priests. We received them wholly and solely to preach, not to administer sacraments. And those who imagine these offices to be inseparably joined are totally ignorant of the constitution of the whole Jewish as well as Christian Church. Neither the Romish, nor the English, nor the Presbyterian Churches ever accounted them so. Otherwise we should never have accepted the service, either of Mr. Maxfield, Richards, or Westell.<sup>2</sup>

Lay Preachers became a significant part of the Methodist movement and they soon outnumbered Wesley's itinerant preachers, most of whom were ordained clergy of the Church of England who had become supporters of Mr Wesley. Most Lay Preachers worked within their own locality, although a few were engaged in itinerant work. Most were men, although Wesley did admit a few women preachers so long as they had an 'extra-ordinary call' from God. By the time of Wesley's death in 1791 it is estimated there were around 2,000 local preachers, compared with around 300 itinerant preachers.

I mentioned Susanna Wesley briefly above. It is worth spending just a little longer giving an account of this important woman. If our tradition practiced canonizing saints, Susanna Wesley would be one of the most worthy candidates. She has long been known affectionately as the 'Mother of Methodism'. But there is much more to this than mere affection. She was far more influential than some have recognized. I mention just a few facets of her story.

Susanna was born in 1669, the second youngest child of a large family. Her father was the scholarly and devout Dr Samuel Annesley. Her mother was Dr Annesley's second wife. In 1662 Samuel Annesley was one of around 2,000 priests of the Church of England who had been ejected from their parishes because of controversy about the imposition of the Book of Common Prayer. Samuel Annesley went on to become a significant leader in the 'Dissenting' movement.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon 115, 'The Ministerial Office' (paragraph 10), in Wesley's *Works* (Jackson edition), Volume 7, pp. 4-5.

Susanna's early childhood was exposed to much of the theological debate that took place in these years of upheaval, much of it in the family home at Spital Yard, Bishopgate, in London. Samuel and his wife were progressive in many ways and made sure that all their children had a lively and disciplined education. In this regard Susanna had considerable advantage on many young women of her time. She was also a person of independent spirit and thought. By the time she was thirteen she had decided for herself to return to the Anglican Church. In time, she met Samuel Wesley, probably in her family home, at a Dissenter's meeting. He too chose to return to the Anglican fold and the two were married in 1688.

A decade or so later, in 1697, Samuel Wesley was installed as Rector at Epworth. Susanna gave birth to nineteen children, only ten of whom lived to adulthood. In spite of poor circumstances, she provided for each, including the girls, a sound classical education. She conducted her own school in the Rectory. Following his escape from a fire that burnt down the Rectory when he was five, young 'Jackie' seems to have received her particular attention.

Life for the Wesleys was not easy. They were poor, and at least once Samuel was imprisoned for failing to repay his debts. Samuel and Susanna did not always see eye to eye. Sometimes they differed on matters of religion and politics. On one occasion Samuel observed that Susanna did not say 'Amen' at their daily prayers, when he prayed for the new king, William. This resulted in a serious squabble and soon after Samuel left for London, leaving a curate in church of his parish. It appears the curate was not a good preacher and the parishioners stayed away from church. Meanwhile, Susanna had already begun providing for the spiritual needs of her household – her children and servants. She offered prayers and instruction. In time some of the local parishioners asked if they could attend, and this she allowed. Before long there were up to two hundred people gathering weekly in and around the Rectory. The curate was furious and sent a message to Samuel in London. Samuel wrote immediately demanding that she cease the meetings forthwith. Susanna was not to be discouraged and wrote in return, 'If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience, but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment, for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of

our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>3</sup> Samuel dropped the matter, and Susanna continued leading her devotions until her husband returned to his parish.

Susanna was a wise woman, and she was also theologically well-informed. Her adult sons sought advice and theological insight from both their parents. Some of their correspondence has survived. It appears Susanna had a more lasting influence, and this cannot merely be attributed to her outliving her husband by some years. We have already noted that Susanna, who for some time lived in John's house in London, played an important role during the earliest days of the Methodist revival. She was influential in ensuring that her rather strict son, John, did not dismiss the preaching ministry of Thomas Maxwell simply because he was not ordained. We might even say that the origins of the ministry of Methodist Local Preachers owes much to her influence. John Wesley, however, was quick to realize that in extraordinary times God was inclined to lead the church into extraordinary forms of ministry.

A word needs to be said about the role of women in the life of early Methodism. This is not the context in which to deal with this subject in great detail. However, there can be no doubt that Susanna Wesley's influence on her sons was clearly reflected in the variety of roles provided for women in early Methodism, much of which was quite uncommon and even extraordinary for the period. It is instructive to note that the emergence of the role of women in Methodism, including their role as 'preachers' emerged as part of the extraordinary nature of Methodism itself.

Paul Wesley Chilcote's *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*<sup>4</sup> is useful in understanding the nature of Methodism and the Wesleyan Revival. In particular it deals with the emergence of women preachers; but it does so in the context of the overall emergence of lay ministry, including that of lay preaching. It is of considerable value in understanding the Methodist movement, the evolution of the ministry of lay preacher, including the role of women in this and other ministries. Chilcote explains how

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Mary Greetham, *Susanna Wesley: Mother of Methodism*, (Peterborough: The Foundry Press 1994), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Wesley Chilcote, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1991.

Methodism, under the leadership of John Wesley, was seen as an extraordinary movement. It is instructive to cite Wesley's own views on this. The first reference is from a letter from John to his brother Charles on 23 June 1739:

DEAR BROTHER,

MY answer to them which trouble me is this: God commands me to do good unto all men; to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man commands me not to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, not to do it at all. If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge ye.

'But,' say they, 'it is just that you submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.' True; to every ordinance of man which is not contrary to the command of God. But if any man, Bishop or other, ordain that I shall not do what God commands me to do, to submit to that ordinance would be to obey man rather than God.

And to do this, I have both an ordinary call and an extraordinary. My ordinary call is, my ordination by the Bishop: 'Take thou authority to preach the word of God.' My extraordinary call is witnessed by the works God doeth by my ministry; which prove that He is with me of a truth in this exercise of my office.

Perhaps this might be better expressed in another way: God bears witness in an extraordinary manner, that my thus exercising my ordinary call is well-pleasing in his sight.

But what if a Bishop forbids this? I do not say as St. Cyprian, *Populus a scelerato Antistite separare se debet*. But I say, God being my helper, I will obey him still: And if I suffer for it, his will be done. Adieu! <sup>5</sup>

Chilcote gives a useful account of the 'extraordinary' steps that Wesley took in response to this special calling he had. His own 'field preaching' was perhaps the first and most challenging step outside what he considered to be 'ordinary'; and this was something he referred to as 'vile.'

As we have already noted, under the influence of his mother, and in response to what he saw as the leading of the Spirit, Wesley allowed Thomas Maxfield, and then others, to engage in lay preaching. It was

<sup>5</sup> Wesley's *Works* (Jackson edition), Volume 12, p. 99.

not long before the first signs were beginning to show of this ministry being extended to women. However, here there was a reluctance, and consequently a longer period of evolution. It is useful to note, as Chilcote points out, that the role of women as preachers was a natural outworking of the leading role that women played in Methodism, especially in its earlier years. Early women leaders, like Grace Murray, emerged as leaders in band and class meetings and soon became leaders in other gatherings, offering prayer, giving testimony, reading Mr Wesley's sermons and notes, and offering 'exhortation'. Grace Murray's gifts were such that Wesley engaged her services in itinerant work.

A major issue had to do with the difference between 'exhortation' and 'preaching'. For Wesley the difference was important, especially in the earlier years of the revival. He saw 'exhortation' as giving encouragement to others in the faith, and this could include reference to Bible passages. 'Preaching', on the other hand, he saw as taking a Biblical text and expounding it. Over time Wesley's natural prejudice against women preaching, and his anxiety to retain the distinction between exhortation and preaching, dissipated. This was in no small part on account of his growing awareness of the value of the work done by such leading women as Mrs Sarah (Sally) Crosby and Mrs Mary Bosanquet. Again it is instructive to cite Wesley's own words in two letters to Sarah Crosby. The first letter, written from London and dated 14 February 1761, concerned whether or not Mrs Crosby had gone too far in her public exhortation.

MY DEAR SISTER,

Miss — gave me yours on Wednesday night. Hitherto, I think you have not gone too far. You could not well do less. I apprehend all you can do more is, when you meet again, to tell them simply, 'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women Preachers: Neither do I take upon me any such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' This will, in a great measure, obviate the grand objection, and prepare for J. Hampson's coming. I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily. If you have time, you may read to them the Notes on any chapter before you speak a few words; or one of the most awakening sermons, as other women have done long ago.

The work of God goes on mightily here, both in conviction and conversion. This morning I have spoken with four or five who seem to have been set at liberty within this month. I believe, within five



weeks, six in one class have received remission of sins, and five in one band received a second blessing. Peace be with you all!

I am Your affectionate brother. (JW)<sup>6</sup>

The 1760s were years of considerable growth in Methodism. Along with this was a continued recognition of the extraordinary nature of the things that were taking place under God. I think it is reasonable to suggest that Wesley's theology was shaped, not simply by the doctrines of the Established Church, but also by experience. This, in turn, grew from his observation that this was consistent with the primitive church.

The second letter I cite was written to Mrs Crosby just over a decade later, in June 1771. This time Wesley was writing from Londonderry, Ireland. It will be noted that by this time Wesley was more open to considering Sarah's ministry as 'preaching' and that he associates her with lay preaching – even though he knew there was resistance to his position by others.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I THINK the strength of the cause rests there; on your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay Preachers: Otherwise, I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of his providence. Therefore, I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular.

I am, my dear sister,  
Your affectionate brother. (JW)<sup>7</sup>

Space does not permit a more detailed account of the extraordinary evolution of the ministry of Lay Preacher within Methodism. It is useful, however, to note that this ministry went on to become a feature of Methodism both in Britain and its colonies. A further note, however, is necessary at this point. During the latter years of Wesley's life, it is fair to say, the role of women preachers,

particularly of some of the extraordinary women who emerged as leaders, was accepted. However, in the years following Wesley's death, this acceptance diminished considerably. This was particularly so in Wesleyan Methodism where the power struggles between the ordained preachers and the laity came to the fore. This was partly to do with the debate about Methodism's relationship with the Church of England. Some of the branches of Methodism that separated from Wesleyan Methodism, such as the Primitive Methodists, continue to have an emphasis on lay ministry, and retained the possibility for women to exercise this ministry. Other minor Methodist groups, such as the Bible Christians, took a similar stance.

Some close parallels can be drawn between the emergence of the role of women in the primitive church and its suppression by a dominant patriarchy in the period that followed, and that of Wesleyan Methodism. Under the extraordinary leadership of John Wesley women were allowed to exercise extraordinary roles. Under the dominant male leadership that followed, such leadership by women was largely suppressed. It was not until some time after Methodist union (1902 in Australasia and 1932 in Britain) that the leadership role of women again began to emerge and women were accepted as lay preachers. This, in large part, can be attributed to the influence of some of the minor Methodist groups who kept the issues alive. However, the leadership given by the founder of Methodism in these matters was never fully forgotten.

I conclude by sharing what I believe to be an inspiring story of the ministry of a Lay Preacher who commenced his lay ministry in Tasmania, and then came to Victoria to become the '*father of Methodism*' in that state.

William Witton was born in London in 1811 and by the time he was 19, in 1830, young William had migrated to Tasmania, settling in Launceston. Here this young Anglican came under the influence of the Wesleyan Methodists and, before long, became an accredited lay preacher under the guidance of both ministerial and lay preachers in that place. In 1835 Port Phillip was established as a settlement, and a movement of people from Launceston made its way across Bass Strait to establish the village of Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Volume 12, p. 329.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Volume 12, p. 332.

One of the early settlers in Melbourne was William Witton, who by this time was married with a young family. He was in his mid-twenties. However, he was held in such high regard that he was authorised by the District Chairman, the Rev Joseph Orton, to commence missionary work in Melbourne. He was appointed by Orton as the first Class Leader, and was the most regular lay preacher in Melbourne's earliest preaching places. The earliest Class meetings were held in the Witton home in Lonsdale Street.

A decade later, Melbourne had grown and the first minister had settled into his appointment. William Witton was sent to Portland Bay as a 'hired local preacher' to continue his ministry there – in conjunction with some business ventures. Discovering there was already a local preacher in the area, he moved to Belfast (Port Fairy) where he exercised a significant ministry. From there, in 1847, he ventured to the infant village of Warrnambool and commenced the first services of Christian worship in that place. Witton provided an overseeing role until the first ministers were appointed in the Western District. He remained for some years as a leading ('almost perpetual curate') in the region. In the 1870s he moved to Gippsland, where again he exercised an important pioneering ministry as a lay preacher. He prepared there for the first ordained ministers, and when they arrived, continued a very effective lay ministry in the region. He is credited with being the founder of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Warragul.

At the Jubilee celebrations of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victorian in 1885 William Witton was rightly recognized as the 'Father of Methodism in Victoria'.

## DIGITALISED SPIRITUALITY?<sup>1</sup>

Jonathan P. Case

What are some of the promises and perils that the age of 'digitalised spirituality' (i.e., spirituality 'in, with and under' cyberspace) holds for us? Given the history of evangelicalism in the twentieth-century, it's interesting to note that, even with concerns over the accessibility of on-line pornography, no conservative church leader with any credibility has suggested that we keep the internet entirely out of our homes, as was suggested in some of the debates in the 1950s (in the United States especially) over the question of whether Christians should watch television. Acceptance of the television revolution more or less primed us for the Internet invasion of our lives.

And it is amazing to consider what futurologists are saying about the technological developments in the not-too-distant future. Leading futurologist Ray Kurzweil has made some rather bracing projections about the coming merger of human and machine.<sup>2</sup> If Kurzweil is correct, we are only about a decade away from the disappearance of computing as a 'discrete technology' that needs to be carried.<sup>3</sup> In reading his descriptions, one supposes that even the *Jetsons* would be jealous. Most computer electronics in the near future, Kurzweil says, will be embedded in our eyeglasses, clothing, etc. These computers, he says, 'will enable us to meet with each other in full immersion, visual-auditory, virtual reality environments as well as augment our vision with location and time specific information at all times.'<sup>4</sup>

Yet we are, Kurzweil says, only a few decades away from the development of *biological nano-electromechanical systems*, which, when implanted, will allow us to experience 'full immersion' in virtual

<sup>1</sup> Lecture delivered at Houghton College, Houghton, New York (USA) in March 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Ray Kurzweil, 'We Are Becoming Cyborgs,' (March 15, 2002) at <http://www.kurzweilai.net/meme/frame.html?main=/articles/art0449.html> See also Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (London: Phoenix, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Kurzweil, 'We Are Becoming Cyborgs,' par. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

reality at will, a virtual reality that is been constructed so precisely that we will be able to, among other things, experience what its like to be someone else by plugging into his or her sensory-emotional beam.<sup>5</sup>

These prognostications may seem a bit far-fetched, but clearly the potential for the growth and distribution of knowledge in the next stages of technological advance is staggering. 'Cybermarketeer' Michael Bauwens reckons that, according to calculations based on the mathematical study of novelty, our collective knowledge about the world has been reduced to less than three years, whereas in early ages it took some thousands of years. According to Bauwens, there is some speculation that 'a hypothetical point in the not too distant future will occur, called the Singularity. At this point, knowledge will double in a single moment, leaving mankind utterly unable to even understand what is happening.'<sup>6</sup>

Bauwens reminds us of a comment by science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke: 'any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.'<sup>7</sup> I'm reminded of *Star Trek* episodes in which the gods and their miraculous powers really turn out to be aliens with advanced technology. If futurologists are correct, we all are going to have seemingly magical powers at our fingertips, and there is no holding this future back. In fact, those who stick their heads in the sand or seem to be resisting the inevitable are increasingly held in suspicion.

In my class on postmodernism I use a scene from one of the most well-written programmes to ever grace the small screen, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The character Giles comes from the traditional world of books and can hardly help being dragged kicking and screaming into the computer age. In one particular scene, he's asked one of his young charges to scan a book and, as usual, expresses his fear and loathing of computers. After Giles expresses his unwavering preference for 'a good book,' another character intones, 'The printed page is obsolete. Information isn't bound up anymore. It's an entity. The only reality is virtual. *If you're not jacked in, you're not alive.*'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, par. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Bauwens, 'Spirituality and Technology: Exploring the Relationship,' (1996) at <http://firstmonday.org/issues/issues5/bauwens/index.html>, par. 5

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, par. 21.

<sup>8</sup> The script for this episode ('I Robot, You Jane') can be found at <http://vrya.net/bdb/clip.php?clip=2909>

'If you're not jacked in, you're not alive.' The point of the metaphor refers to more than just a VR helmet. If you're not jacked in, online, hooked up to broadband, plugged into the new cyberworld, not only are you not with it, you're not alive. Our life in the future, everyone seems to be telling us, is going to be dependent more and more on the ongoing cyber-revolution. If you're not 'jacked in,' you won't really be alive.

Our advances and dreams of the future cannot help but have an impact on religious structures and how we conceive of spirituality. Richard Thieme, a popular techno-philosopher, points out that the past three great eras of what he calls 'the technology of the Word' –speech, writing and printing –all transformed religious structures and gave birth to distinctive forms of spirituality and religious experience, and we should expect that fourth great era of electronic media in our time –cyberspace and virtual reality- will have a similar effect.<sup>9</sup>

It's interesting to hear what leaders in the technology industry itself have to say about the interface between spirituality and the realm of technology. Many of these business leaders have a strong interest in spiritual matters. Kim Polese, for example, who was the original product manager for Java and co-founder of *Marimba*, believes that 'as evolution is about matter moving towards spirituality,' the internet itself is an important development in spirituality, since 'it makes physical presence less important. We can exist on another level – a slightly higher consciousness. Plus, the hum of millions of collective voices on the Net is itself a level of consciousness that floats above that of individuals.'<sup>10</sup> Her sentiments are also expressed by those who believe that our expanding global sphere of communication is producing, is evolving into, what is called a 'noosphere' (a term originally used in the utopian literature of Teilhard de Chardin), a higher collective mental reality.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Richard Thieme, 'The Future Shape of Religious Structures,' (March 1997) at <http://www.december.com/cmc/mag/1997/mar/last.html>, par. 3.

<sup>10</sup> quoted in Kevin Maney, 'Will Religion Survive? The Curiosity That Makes Technologists Shine Puts Faith to the Test,' *USA Today* March 27, 2001, at <http://www.usatoday.com/educate/college/healthscience/casestudies/20020313-religion.pdf>, par. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Lonny J. Brown, 'The Spirit of Cyberspace,' *Convergence Magazine* Winter 1996, at <http://www.lightparty.com/Spirituality/CyberSpace.html>, par. 4.

Indeed, cyberspace and the net have themselves taken on a spiritual and quasi-religious quality. The World Wide Web has been likened to the ancient Vedic mythical image of Indra's vast 'web of Jewels' in which each jewel reflects all of the jewels in the web infinitely, the Internet to the 'Akashic Records' mentioned in Buddhist literature, which contains the stories of everyone's lives and the record of all events, actions and thoughts in this earthly realm.<sup>12</sup> Some groups that refer to themselves as 'technopagans' have created elaborate shamanic rituals to sacralise the net. Michael Bauwens reports that just a few years ago, Tibetan monks at the Namgyal Institute Ithaca, New York consecrated cyberspace by using a ritual usually performed by the Dalai Lama himself.<sup>13</sup>

In sum, the picture being painted for us, on a number of fronts, is that of a shiny happy techno-spiritual future. Our optimistic friends at Unifying Fields Foundation, whose aim is to utilise the insights of Unified Field theory for the spiritual transformation of human consciousness –and whose motto is 'Downloading your Higher Self' – have this to say to reassure us of the future:

Science will discover answers to its mysteries; nations will evolve new forms of governance, businesses will use new forms of harmonious commerce; arts and religion will enter a new golden age; and individuals can construe new paradigms for self-transformation, interpersonal relationships and spiritual unfoldment. We want to be a part of this discovery. We believe this mission to be profound.<sup>14</sup>

This language of mission in relation to 'downloading your higher self' is provocative, since we, of course, happen to be on a mission too. John Perry Barlow has described cyberspace, the virtual world, as a 'new locale of human community,' a town that has neither seasons nor sunsets nor smells.<sup>15</sup> Is this our new 'locale' for mission? Andrew Careaga reminds us that several years ago George Barna predicted the emergence of a cyberchurch at the dawn of the new millennium.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Bauwens, 'Deus ex Machina vs. Electric Gaia,' (April 1997)

<http://www.december.com/cmc/mag/1997/apr/last.html>, par. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Bauwens, 'Spirituality and Technology,' par. 38

<sup>14</sup> See the *Unifying Fields Foundation's* mission statement, at <http://www.unifying.com/web/mission.html>. Cited by Lonnie J. Brown, 'The Spirit of Cyberspace,' at <http://www.lightparty.com/Spirituality/CyberSpace.html>

<sup>15</sup> Bauwens, op. cit., par. 34.

Millions, Barna said, will never actually travel to a church but will instead 'roam the Internet for meaningful spiritual experiences,' and as the traditional church becomes less and less relevant, Barna concluded that we would see a growing number of people 'isolated from the traditional church format.'<sup>16</sup>

Barna's predictions have been close to the mark. In recent years church leaders more or less have been forced to grapple with the question some people have about the possibilities of cyber-spirituality in light of their dislike of traditional church structures, questions of the order: 'Why on earth would I want to get involved with a traditional church structure and all of its nonsense –boring services, power struggles, the big heavy boot of a church hierarchy and official dogma - when there is so much freedom to search for exactly the kind of spirituality you want in cyberspace? I can be a part of a truly worldwide community, get connected with people from all parts of the globe in spirituality chat rooms, get the best spiritual music and streaming video, all just by jacking in.'

In thinking about these questions, we have to reckon first of all with the fact that postmodern spirituality itself is rather slippery yet angular at the same time. By that I mean, there may be an interest in a rather vague transcendent something 'out there' –or, more likely, something mystical 'in here'—but established authorities can keep their hands off my quest to find out what it is, thank you very much. Konrad Waloszczyk gives as succinct and accurate a definition of postmodern spirituality as I've ever encountered: 'spirituality is the realization of values and realities called divine, sacred or simply 'transcendental,' without revealed, fixed doctrine or external organization.'<sup>17</sup>

And when the putative freedom of postmodern spirituality is put together with the hypermodern world of readily available consumer options in cyberspace, *everyone* seems to be happy. David Kinnaman, vice president of Barna, puts it this way: online seekers are like 'grazers' at a spiritual smorgasbord. "They're more concerned

<sup>16</sup> Cited by Andrew Careaga, 'Embracing the Cyberchurch,' (December 1999) at [http://www.next-wave.org/dec99/embracing\\_the\\_cyberchurch.htm](http://www.next-wave.org/dec99/embracing_the_cyberchurch.htm), par. 1. See also Andrew Careaga, *E-vangelism: Sharing the Gospel in Cyberspace* (Vital Issues, 1999)

<sup>17</sup> Konrad Waloszczyk, 'Shaping the Intercultural Spirituality,' (paper at 2003 Fifth Congress of ISUD), at <http://www.isud.org/papers/pdfs/Woloszczyk.pdf>, par. 11.

with how spirituality can improve their quality of life and enhance their choices than as a way to connect with a holy entity.<sup>18</sup> So this slippery character of postmodern spirituality, especially as it is manifested on the net, makes mission a tricky affair. Careaga says that if we are going to be successful in 'jacking into' this field, there are a few things we're going to have to think about.<sup>19</sup>

First of all, he says, we're going to have to develop our interactivity online. People with surfing mentality have short attention spans. We're going to need things like webpage sermons that incorporate hypertext links to bible passages, audio clips, visuals, chat room Bible discussions. We'll also have to recognise that ministry in cyberspace is a loosely structured instead of a top-down affair. Cyberspace spirituality fits well with the postmodern desire for rhizomatic or non-hierarchical forms of communication, and we're going to have to deal with it. Connected with this, we're going to have to face the fact that the net is the great leveller of religious claims: our faith is seen as just one more religious option out there in the spiritual marketplace. Cybercongregations have the freedom to accept a variety of religious truths and perspectives.

In this situation of radical pluralism, Careaga says we should expect and even encourage serious questioning from people, and make available the resources to answer people's questions. This in turn is going to make it necessary for us to collaborate with other online ministries - there are many Christian groups from different parts of the world who've never met but who work together on the net for evangelism. And finally, Careaga says, we're going to have to remember that the online church is unfettered by time or space. Somebody may still be in his pjs while on the other side of the world someone may be logging on at the end of the day. So 'church' can occur for these people 'at any time, at any place.'<sup>20</sup>

As perilous as digitalised spirituality seems to be, Careaga and others seem to be saying, the promise of engaging people with the gospel makes it worthwhile for us to 'jack in.' Essentially, I share this sense

<sup>18</sup> Cited by Marilyn Elias, 'New Ways Likely to Replace Old-Time Religion,' *USA Today* Feb 28, 2001, at <http://www.usatoday.com/life/2001-02-28-baby-boomers-religion.htm>, par. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Careaga, 'Embracing the Cyberchurch.' In what follows, I have summarised the key points of Careaga's essay.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, par. 15.

of promise and agree that we must boldly go into this still relatively new missions frontier. But as the church 'jacks into' digitalised spirituality, as a theologian I'm still concerned for flesh and blood congregations, and have a few observations and counter-questions of my own about this whole phenomena in relation to that question posed above: 'Why in the world should I belong to a traditional church -or any conventional religious institution for that matter -when I have all these resources and possibilities in cyberspace?' My questions have to do first of all with the *kind* of spirituality idealised in cyberspace, secondly with the kind of personal identity that tends to be engendered or encouraged in that context, and thirdly with the kind of community that's envisioned and actually established.

To begin, it seems to me that cyberspace does well with those types or kinds of spirituality that conceive of spiritual advancement or sophistication in terms of a gradual evolution from matter to spirit -maybe along the lines of some Eastern forms of spirituality, the creation of a 'noosphere' as mentioned above. But that is not necessarily a higher form of spirituality; in fact it sounds fairly Gnostic.

Far from having as its aim a rarefied spiritual ether or noosphere, at the very centre of Christian spirituality stands the incarnation. We do not believe in an avatar; we believe in an incarnate Saviour. Christian spirituality is an earthy and embodied spirituality, by virtue of our Lord Jesus assuming human being in all its essential aspects and thereby sanctifying those dimensions. We do not believe that our ultimate destination is a spiritual noosphere; we believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Far from being a flight into the abstract, the realm of disembodied ideals, Christian spirituality pushes us back down onto the earth. Contra Polese, Christians don't believe that that less physical presence is an advance or improvement on spirituality.

Christians realise that there is nothing innately or intrinsically holy about the realm of mind or spirit, as though if we could just transcend this 'stuff' we'd be in an immortal realm of untainted ideas or undistorted communication. Innsbruck theologian Jozef Niewiadomski reminds us that such an immortalisation of human consciousness in cyberspace is also an immortalisation of our unredeemed properties - our rivalries, envies and so on. Cyberspace is, after all, he says, merely empty 'space' in which our anxieties,

desires and hopes, passions, deeds and misdeeds are mirrored, imitated and turned back to exercise their power on other human beings.<sup>21</sup>

The two other concerns mentioned above have to do with the question of what the digital and virtual are posing about the nature of personal identity and of community. These are deeply interconnected themes; I will tackle the question of personal identity first.

How does one's identity develop and perdure across time and a variety of social interaction? Life in the anonymity and heteronymity of cyberspace forces us to grapple with that question. The question of personal identity is one with which postmodern theorists regularly wrestle, of course, but let me tell you how it really came home to me in connection with the subject of cyber-identities.

Over the past few years I've been reading a great deal by the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa. Pessoa wrote under a number of heteronyms: Alberto Careiro, Ricardo Reis, Alvaro de Campos –and a semi-heteronym named Bernardo Soares, who 'authored' the magnificent *Book of Disquiet*. While literary alter egos were fashionable among early twentieth century authors, none of them went as far as Pessoa, who gave each of his heteronyms a personal biography, psychology, physique, politics, aesthetics and religion.<sup>22</sup> He even wrote under an orthonym named Fernando Pessoa, who was just as fictional as the others. By his life's end, Pessoa had written under some 72 different names that were responsible for literally thousands of texts. These personae interacted with each other, collaborated with and critiqued each other, and even translated each other.

Richard Zenith, one of Pessoa's translators, has this to say of him: Pessoa's heteronymic conceit accentuated his personal condition of self-estrangement. 'Each heteronym was a fresh personification of

<sup>21</sup> Jozef Niewiadomski, 'Extra Media Nulla Salus? Attempt at a Theological Synthesis,' (2003) at

[http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/events/innsbruck2003/Niewiadomski\\_Paper.doc](http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/events/innsbruck2003/Niewiadomski_Paper.doc), par. 26. Niewiadomski is reflecting a basic Girardian analysis in his paper.

<sup>22</sup> See Richard Zenith, 'Introduction: The Drama and Dream of Fernando Pessoa,' in Richard Zenith, ed., *Fernando Pessoa & Co. – Selected Poems* (New York: Grove, 1998) 1-36, especially 2-3.

his abdication from being, a restatement of the fact that he was nothing at all, just an empty place in the universe where many roads happened to meet.'<sup>23</sup>

While reading Pessoa, the thought occurred to me that this man –and his multiple heteronyms– was in some ways a forerunner, and is perhaps symbolic, of the 'Age of the Alter Ego' we see emerging in internet chat rooms and forums, where a single person can author a myriad of identities across a number of conversations on the web. (Maybe St Fernando could be the patron saint of the chatroom!)

People who engage in this kind of activity seem to me to be afflicted by a kind of Pessoa-syndrome (even if they're bereft of his magnificent command of language and verse), and in the disembodied chat of the chatroom it's likely that their own situation of self-estrangement, like Pessoa's, becomes accentuated. Who am I? No one in particular: just an empty place where a variety of cyber identities are tried out. And if that is the case, then what kind of communities are likely to emerge, are they likely to be a part of? –hence the third question I raised earlier.

Niewiadomski and Juergen Moltmann have some insights we need to hear in relation to these concerns. Moltmann reminds us that only within the nexus of promises –promises made and promises kept–does a person acquire continuity within time and thus identity.<sup>24</sup> People who forget their promises forget themselves; those who remain true to their promises remain true to themselves. And these promises are connected to our names. We sign contracts with our names and vouch for promises with our names. Thus a person's identity over the course of a life history is designated by that person's name. 'Through my name, I identify myself with the person I was in the past, and anticipate myself as the person I want to be in the future.'<sup>25</sup>

This question of identity, Moltmann says, is closely connected to that of freedom. Making and keeping promises, he says, 'are not restrictions on personal freedom but rather the concrete actualisation

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Juergen Moltmann, 'The Change of Values in the Western World,' (1997) at [http://www.ctinquiry.org/publications/reflections\\_volume\\_1/moltmann.htm](http://www.ctinquiry.org/publications/reflections_volume_1/moltmann.htm), par. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, par. 40.

of freedom.<sup>26</sup> So where am I personally free? he asks. In a supermarket where I can buy whatever I want but no one knows me and not even the cashier looks me in the eye? I would add: in the anonymity or heteronymity of the chatroom where you can say anything about yourself but no one really knows you? Or in a community where people can look me in the eye, in which I'm accepted and thus affirmed as I am? The first, Moltmann says, is the reality of 'individual freedom of choice'; the second the reality of 'communicative freedom.' Where should the primary locus of community be?

In relation to the question about community, Niewiadomski makes the point that in some ways the media society has promised a kind of Cyber-Constantinianism: an apparent universality or catholicity, as it absorbs individuals, cultures and even religions into a new kind of religious unity.<sup>27</sup> What the church did not achieve while Constantinianism was in full bloom, the electronically linked society seems to accomplish now. 'Everywhere in the world,' Niewiadomski writes '... the decisive factor of socialization of the global culture—the commercialised new media—overcomes frontiers and barriers; human persons of all races and classes, all layers and groups of society are, voluntarily or involuntarily, gathered into one and the same globally passionate community.'<sup>28</sup> We are reminded of media theorist Marshall McLuhan dreams in the 1960s of a 'Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity' brought about by computerisation.<sup>29</sup>

But, Niewiadomski says, in the midst of this great promise of community a paradox occurs. The fascination that we have with cyberspace lies in the fact that it makes things like traditional institutions, market mechanisms and even the interlinking of communication itself necessary to my individual experience of freedom. In other words, cyberspace turns the traditional roles of institutions—such as the church—'upside down' and places them unreservedly in the service of my individual desire.<sup>30</sup> What this means, Niewiadomski says, is that even as people become interlinked electronically, their experience becomes even more individualised,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, par. 41.

<sup>27</sup> Jozef Niewiadomski, op cit, par. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid (Cited by Niewiadomski), par. 16

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, par. 17

until in cyberspace everyone can experience himself or herself as the creator of his or her own dematerialised world.<sup>31</sup> Once you 'jack in,' we might say, you can experience yourself as a kind of God.

The unleashing—and to some degree fulfilment—of that kind of human desire cannot help but incite envy, rivalry and competition on a hitherto unimaginable scale: thus increasing numbers of people are coming to define themselves as *victims* within the global society shaped by the mass technological media. Niewiadomski sums it up this way: As paradoxical as it may sound, while the global society that was created through the mass media by its webs of communication has brought about a common history of humankind, at the same time it has atomised its members and made them lonely. Above all, he says, it offers no solution to the 'experiment' it has started of globalising envy, jealousy, mimetic rivalry and resentment.<sup>32</sup>

Specifically, what form does this experiment take in cyberspace? Billions of naked bodies that can never be possessed, billions of people are desperately searching for romance ('just like you'), billions of dollars to be won, billions of credit card numbers to be plugged in (or scammed), billions of electronic signatures needed for various petitions. Who are the haves and have-nots? Which site is the most popular? Who will have their most intimate correspondence or most degrading video sent to every email box on the planet? Who will win? Who will lose? Who will be voted off?

The worldwide web is an amazing 'place' to be sure, but when we jack into this world, this matrix, it is still very much *our* matrix, *our* world. With these reflections in mind, to the question again: 'Why should I want to belong to a conventional congregation—with all its hassles—when I can simply 'jack in' to all the marvels of digitalised spirituality?'

Because, first of all, the Gospel *does* declare a solution to that envy, jealousy, rivalry and resentment that characterises our plight. That solution lays in the fact that Jesus Christ has jacked into our fallen flesh and blood reality. In his crucifixion he has exposed the powers, the frenzy of desire that holds us captive and always seeks a victim,

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pars. 19-20.

and in his resurrection he has triumphed over those powers and sent his Spirit to transform us. And we 'jack in' to that reality first and foremost in a flesh and blood community that has been called and gathered around font and altar, where the risen Christ continues to come to us through Word and sacrament. 'Digitalised spirituality' is one matter. 'Digitalised sacramentality' is a contradiction in terms—at least as far as I understand the meaning of the Christian sacraments.

In that community, our personal identities are enriched and mediated to us as we journey with each other in the physicality of discipleship together. Of making and keeping promises to each other to *be there*: holding the new baby, laying on hands in prayer, passing the peace or passing the casserole dish, waiting all night at the bedside, standing at the gravesite, being the shoulder to lean on or cry on, greeting each other with a holy kiss (or at least bear-hugging each other from time to time.) These things are not incidental to the life of the church; indeed these are the activities that make the strongest impact on people.

As this community of the redeemed, of the liberated, makes its calling sure, it does so in this world, this earth that has been groaning right up to the present time, this world filled with extraordinary beauty and profound suffering. I hope we can say to those around us: 'Jack into *this* community, this calling, this reality and you'll be truly alive.'

## **'JUST ANOTHER 'QUEER SECT' FROM OVER THE PACIFIC: ANTI-AMERICANISM AND THE WESLEYAN-HOLINESS CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA<sup>1</sup>**

**Glen O'Brien**



*EE Zachary with koala (Photo: Nazarene archives)*

'...to a number of people [the Church of the Nazarene]...is just another 'queer' sect from over the pacific [sic]...So far, any mention I have made of [it]...has not been received on the whole with a great deal of pleasure...I am endeavouring to break down the idea that it is not just the starting of another sect but the introduction of a Church here that God can use...for the propagation of...holiness...'<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

When North American Wesleyan-Holiness churches began to arrive in Australia in the years immediately following the Second World War, they faced considerable opposition from Australian Christians who, to some extent, resented American influence on the religious scene. During the war, minority religious groups, such as Jehovah's

<sup>1</sup>Sections of this paper previously appeared in Glen O'Brien, "A Dogged Inch-by-Inch Affair": The Church of the Nazarene in Australia 1945-1958,' *The Journal of Religious History* vol. 27, no. 2 (June 2003) pp. 215-233, and are used here with permission.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Berg to Ted Hollingsworth, 8 January 1945, Kansas City, Nazarene Archives.



Witnesses, with beliefs that disallowed bearing arms in defense of the state, were declared illegal.<sup>3</sup> There were limits to how welcoming Australians in general would be of Americans. PL Beals notes that 'the Sydney people rose up and [refused] their large city hall' to 'Judge' Rutherford, the leader of the Jehovah's Witness organization. This was one American who was a little too much for them.<sup>4</sup> The activity of these groups may have led to suspicion also toward the Wesleyan-Holiness churches who allowed their members to take the stance of conscientious objection on religious grounds, an unpopular stance in the immediate post-war years.

Among fellow evangelicals,<sup>5</sup> the Holiness churches were seen as theologically suspect. A major element within Australian evangelicalism, with its colonial roots in English Calvinism, was decidedly anti-Methodist in its theology. Calvinism's stress on human depravity and inability made the Wesleyan claim to 'Christian perfection' seem a hopeless pipe dream, and more than this, a dangerous heresy. In order for the Wesleyan-holiness churches to gain acceptance they would have to negotiate this difficult and unfriendly territory. In this paper, attention will be given to another basis for opposition to these new groups – the fact that they had their origins in the United States.

### I. 'Alexander's Racy Hymns and Americanism'

A longstanding anti-American attitude has existed in Australia throughout its history, right alongside of a positive attitude of fraternity and co-operation. During the nineteenth century many colonial Australians, including Parkes and Deakin, argued that Australia would be the 'United States of the future.' Many looked with envy at America's educational system, its patronage of high culture on the part of the wealthy, and its federal constitution.<sup>6</sup> Mark

<sup>3</sup> Kate Darian-Smith, 'War and Australian Society,' in Joan Beaumont, ed. *Australia's War 1939-1945* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> P. L. Beals, *Report to the Board of General Superintendents*, 9 January 1939, Kansas City, Nazarene Archives, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> I use the term 'evangelical' rather than 'fundamentalist,' because the latter term has now taken on a very different meaning, with overtones of extremism and social threat. The term 'evangelical' may be defined as 'a conservative Christian stance which looks to the Bible for its authority and actively seeks the conversion of others to the Christian faith.'

<sup>6</sup> Richard Waterhouse, 'Popular Culture,' in Philip Bell and Roger Bell, eds. *Americanization and Australia* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 1993), p. 45.

Twain, when conducting a lecture tour in 1895, had seen little difference between Australians and Americans. Their 'easy, cordial manners' were essentially American, 'English friendliness with the English shyness and self-consciousness left out.'<sup>7</sup> The American Constitution's approach to religion was the subject of much discussion during Australia's constitutional debates, resulting in there being close parallels between the two documents on the relationship between religion and the state. The lengthy campaign to include the 'recognition' clause in the Preamble, described in detail by Richard Ely, demonstrated a knowledge of questions of 'religious liberty' drawn from the American experience.<sup>8</sup> Mainstream Protestants could even, like their American counterparts, sound decidedly theocratic in their conception of government and use language reminiscent of the 'manifest destiny' rhetoric of early American Puritanism.<sup>9</sup> Neville Buch has examined the way in which Australian Baptists in the years following the second world war began increasingly to look to the United States for their inspiration.<sup>10</sup> Pastors frequently travelled to the US to receive exposure to and training in methodologies and approaches successful in that country, but with perhaps dubious benefits down under. The traffic also ran in the other direction, as American pastors visited Australia where they were usually well received as successful pastors with proven know how.<sup>11</sup>

For all of the positive connections between the two countries it is clear that anti-Americanism has also been a part of the Australian consciousness for some time, and the religious world has not been exempt from such sentiment. In nineteenth century Victoria, an Anglican newspaper attacked Wesleyan camp meetings at Queenscliff as 'an undesirable United States import likely to be subversive of home discipline and social order,' and this is probably not atypical.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Mark Twain, 'Following the Equator,' cited in Peter A. Thompson and Robert Macklin, *The Battle of Brisbane: Australians and the Yanks at War* (Sydney: ABC Books, 2000), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Ely, *Unto God and Caesar: Religious Issues in the Emerging Commonwealth 1891-1906*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> *Southern Cross*, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1898 in Ely, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Neville Douglas Buch, 'American Influence on Protestantism in Queensland Since 1945,' PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> David Parker, 'Baptists in Queensland, 1855-1995: De-colonizing or Trans-colonizing?: Towards an Understanding of Baptist Identity in Queensland,' <http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/bwa.html>

<sup>12</sup> J. D. Turner, *The Pioneer Missionary*, Melbourne, 1872, pp. 296-34 [the numbering error is in Breward], cited in Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 178.

Hugh Jackson makes a distinction between the American Methodist evangelist William 'California' Taylor as a 'folk evangelist' whose, largely rural, meetings numbered in the hundreds rather than the thousands, and those later 'overseas practitioners of the hot gospel' who, aided by rapid transport and new methods of mass media, increased throughout the 1870s and 90s.<sup>13</sup> The pioneers of this new approach were also Americans - Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey, who took their 'kindlier' message of the Gospel of God's love to Britain in 1873-75. Reports of the success of Moody and Sankey's British campaign reached Australia and gave rise to concerted prayer meetings for revival in Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>14</sup> Many longed for Moody and Sankey to come to Australia and repeat their successes here. They never came, but in 1902 Rueben A. Torrey, the superintendent of Moody's Chicago Bible Institute, did come, accompanied by Charles Alexander to play the musical role earlier performed by Sankey. J. Wilbur Chapman, one of Moody's converts came in 1909 and again in 1912, also accompanied by Alexander.<sup>15</sup> Significant here was the fear on the part of some clergy of the day, such as the Rev. A. Burt, that the converts of such crusades would be converted to 'Alexander's racy hymns and Americanism.'<sup>16</sup>

Jill Julius Matthews has identified 'an extensive and long term campaign of denunciation of Americanism' in the years following the First World War, on the part of business, civic, social, educational, industrial, and political groups.<sup>17</sup> Particularly distasteful to these groups was the cheap American culture conveyed in the cinema, jazz, dancing, advertising, radio, and pulp fiction. In 1922, the movie mogul Will Hays, expressed a confidence that American films correctly depicted American culture and the cultures of other countries, and that this depiction would go far in promoting world

<sup>13</sup> Hugh Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860-1930* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1987), p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Darrel Paproth, 'Revivalism in Melbourne from Federation to World War I: The Torrey-Alexander-Chapman Campaigns,' in Mark Hutchinson, Edmund Campion, and Stuart Piggin, eds. *Reviving Australia: Essays on the History and Experience of Revival and Revivalism in Australian Christianity*. Studies in Australian Christianity Volume 3. (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), pp. 143-69.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, pp. 57-8. See Richard Broome, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: Protestant Christianity in New South Wales Society 1900-1914* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1980), pp. 65-73.

<sup>16</sup> Broome, p. 66.

<sup>17</sup> Jill Julius Matthews, 'Which America?' in Bell and Bell, *Americanization and Australia*, p. 16.

peace. According to Matthews, '[t]his imperial will to exploit the world, to explain the world to itself, and to be boastful about having done so, seems to have been widely resented among Australians' and expressed both in public humour and in political and economic retaliation, through lobbying for the application of tariffs to American goods.<sup>18</sup>

The strongest anti-American feeling in the years following the 'Great War' seems to have come from the Church, as both Catholic and Protestant ecclesiastics cried out against those forms of imported popular culture which were seen to be a threat to the purity of the nation's families. The 1936 encyclical of Pope Pius XI warned against 'the damage done to the soul by bad motion pictures'<sup>19</sup> and everybody knew that the worst culprit was Hollywood. Protestant 'wowsers' was equally vehement in its denunciation of the motion picture. Secular critics were little more sparing in their warning against the moral dangers of Americanisation. They turned their venom against Americanisms in speech, against jazz, crooning, sex and crime films, and the overall lowering of community standards through exposure to such things. 'It is America's mission,' warned Beatrice Tildesley, 'to vulgarise the world.'<sup>20</sup> It would be the war in the Pacific, however, which would introduce a new and intensified phase to Australian-American relations.

## II. Curtin Looks to America

WWII saw a shift to the left in Australian politics with the years of Curtin, Evatt and Chifley a kind of 'Golden Age' in Labor tradition.<sup>21</sup> Menzies' preoccupation with British foreign policy led to a loss of support and Labor had been elected in a landslide in 1943. Now, the wartime conditions favored a strong centralised government, an idea at odds with the philosophy of the conservative parties but well suited to a labor government, providing 'a new legitimacy to labor.'<sup>22</sup>

Curtin made a public declaration of Australia's dependence on the United States to secure its freedom from Japanese aggression in the

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 22-3.

<sup>19</sup> Beatrice Tildesley, 'The Cinema in Australia,' in *Australian Quarterly* 15 December, 1930, pp. 89-103, in Bell and Bell, *Americanization*, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> David Lee, 'Politics and Government,' in Beaumont, p. 82.

<sup>22</sup> Lee, in Beaumont, p. 97.

Pacific. 'Australia looks to America free of any pangs as to our traditional ties or kinship with the United Kingdom.' This speech is often cited as indicating a 'turning point' in Australia's orientation away from Great Britain and toward the United States. This hypothesis maintains that during the war Australia became 'an imperial satellite of capitalist powers which swapped its British master for American ones.'<sup>23</sup> 'No longer was Australia an imperial Antipodes, but the New Frontier down under.'<sup>24</sup> There are earlier precedents, however, which to some extent challenge the 'turning point' theory. In 1909 Alfred Deakin had proposed a Pacific pact that included America, as did Lyons in 1935 and 1937. Even the Menzies government had established an Australian legation in Washington following a 1939 Cabinet decision. Menzies had pressed Roosevelt in May 1940 to commit the US to greater support of the empire. So Curtin was by no means the first to 'look to' the US. After an initial burst of enthusiasm at the onset of the war, relations cooled and Australian leaders began to take a more independent stance, or even to look again toward a revived British empire.<sup>25</sup>

### III. 'The Man with the Turned-Up Hat and the Feller with the Tucked-In Tie'<sup>26</sup>

However the argument over Australia's supposed 'turning point' may be settled, one thing is for certain. A very large number of Americans were about to arrive on Australia's shores. When Curtin insisted, against Churchill's wishes, that the 1st Australian Corp be returned from the Middle East to defend the homeland, the returning diggers encountered a 'friendly' alien in their own backyard – the American

<sup>23</sup> David Lowe, 'Australia in the World,' in Beaumont, p. 169. The debate over whether or not Australia charted a new course in turning away from its traditional links with Great Britain to forge new ones with the US, is outlined in PG Edwards, '1941: A Turning Point in Foreign Policy,' in *Teaching History*, vol. 9 (1975), pp. 18-26.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Dunn, *Australia and Empire: From 1788 to the Present* (Sydney: Fontana, 1984), 156. Beaumont rejects the idea that this speech represents a 'turning point' in Australian foreign policy, Beaumont, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> David Day, 'Pearl Harbour to Nagasaki,' in Bridge, ed. *Munich to Vietnam*, pp. 52-69 cited in Lowe, 'Australians in the World,' in Beaumont, p. 170.

<sup>26</sup> Borrowed from chapter titles in George Johnston's *Pacific Partners*, a book 'about Australia...written by an Australian to give Americans a clearer picture of the role of this great South Pacific ally in the general pattern of World War II...to penetrate into the psychology of the Australian fighting man; and to examine his relations, in action and out of it, with the American doughboy.' George H. Johnston, *Pacific Partners* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1945), p. 5.

GI. American troops began to arrive in increasing numbers from December 1941.

25 000 US troops were reposted from the Philippines to Australia. Between 1942 and 1945 an estimated one million American servicemen would pass through Australia, though never more than 200 000 at any one time.<sup>27</sup>

Early Nazarene leader, Doug Pinch, remembered the ensuing chaos.

With startling suddenness American servicemen with their tanks, jeeps, trucks and earth-moving equipment, the like of which had never [been] imagined [to] exist, filled the streets of that Queensland city. Everything, for the moment, seemed to be in chaos and confusion. Trains were requisitioned for the transportation of military vehicles. The whole pattern and life-style of a city was changed overnight.<sup>28</sup>

Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces, Sir Thomas Blamey, had little respect for the American troops and MacArthur reciprocated in regard to the Australian troops. There was so much concern about clashes between American and Australian troops that the Intelligence Branch recommended that Brisbane be fully lit up at night, a relaxing of the standard 'brown out' that was designed as a protective cover against Japanese attack. A dispute between an American MP and an Australian soldier escalated within an hour to a riot involving 4000 people.<sup>29</sup> Though this was the largest scale incident, other incidents of conflict took place in places as far apart as Townsville and Melbourne.

Reasons for the hatred of Aussies toward the 'Yanks' were many. They had higher pay, better uniforms, were big tipplers, and emerged from the American Postal Exchange with such luxuries as ice-cream, chocolate, hams, turkeys, cigarettes, alcohol, and the nylons so prized by the women. Most grievous of all, however, was that they attracted the Australian women.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> David Day, *Claiming a Continent: A New History of Australia*. (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2002), pp. 226-7.

<sup>28</sup> 'In the Beginning: Memoirs, Rev. W. D. Pinch Church of the Nazarene 1945-64,' p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Thompson and Macklin, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

Rosemary Campbell, in *Heroes and Lovers*, sees the presence of American troops as a threat to 'a national identity based on the rugged masculine world of the bush.' The Americans were refreshingly different from the 'toughened, beer swilling bushmen, diggers and shearers.' They were sensitive, romantic, 'smooth-talking, considerate [and] polite,' and women found this very attractive.<sup>31</sup> Syd Harvey remembered, 'The Yanks were very popular with the girls – they used to go around with a bunch of flowers in their hand and we used to think that was bloody stupid.'<sup>32</sup>

Dorothy Hewitt was not impressed. 'I scorn the Yanks, pasty faced boys who seem to think an orchid or a box of chocolates can buy them anything...Nobody can buy me...I prefer Australians, who give neither orchids nor chocolates, who are inarticulate but seem to promise love and even silent understanding.'<sup>33</sup>

JH Moore in *Over-Sexed, Over-Paid and Over Here*, argues that while Americans were at first warmly received as 'heroes and saviours,' most Australians 'were not sad to see them leave.' The series of murders committed by Private Edward Leonski in Melbourne, and the brawls between Australian and American troops in Australian cities no doubt soured the relationship somewhat. Leonski was tried and swiftly hanged for the murder of three women in Melbourne in 1942.<sup>34</sup>

George Johnston's wartime book *Pacific Partners* has the rather naïve, and perhaps propagandist, view that while '[t]here were brawls and fist fights – 99 per cent of them over women – [they] caused no more serious damage than a few blacked eyes and bleeding noses.'<sup>35</sup> The author describes one fist fight which ended, 'apart from the two battered faces,' with 'nothing to indicate that they hadn't always been

<sup>31</sup> Anthony J. Barker and Lisa Jackson, *Fleeting Attraction: A Social History of American Servicemen in Western Australia During the Second World War* (Perth: University of Western Australia, 1996), pp. 4-5.

<sup>32</sup> Barker and Jackson, p. 152.

<sup>33</sup> Dorothy Hewitt, *Wild Card: An Autobiography 1923-1958* (Ringwood, Victoria, 1990), p. 85.

<sup>34</sup> Private Edward S. Leonski, 24 years old, from New York City, stationed at Royal Park in Melbourne, attempted to strangle a woman in her St. Kilda flat but she escaped. Barker and Jackson, p. 73. He was more successful on 3 May 1942 when he strangled Ivy McLeod in Albert Park, followed by Pauline Thompson on 9 May in the city centre, and Gladys Hosking, in Parkville, on 18 May. Barker and Jackson, pp. 73, 122.

<sup>35</sup> Johnston, p. 105.

the best of friends.'<sup>36</sup> This in spite of the fact that in February 1943 mounted police dispersed brawls between Australian and Americans in Melbourne, and in January 1944 more than 1000 Americans and Australians rioted in Perth.<sup>37</sup> Gunner Edward Webster, formerly of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment, 7<sup>th</sup> Division AIF, was killed by US military police officer, Private Norbert J. Grant, on 26 November 1942. Eight Australian servicemen received gunshot wounds and eleven Americans were injured. The Americans involved, including Grant, were fully exonerated but three Australian privates spent up to six months in jail. The 'man with the turned-up hat' and the 'feller with the tucked-in tie' were on unstable terms at best.<sup>38</sup>

#### IV. The Sanctified Soldier Boys

One factor rarely touched upon in the existing literature is the religion of the American GI. Among the soldiers stationed in Australia were members of the American Holiness churches, the sanctified soldier boys. The arrival of American troops in Brisbane is remembered by Dorothy Hewitt as sending 'a shudder through middle class sensibilities. With visions of young crew cut, gum chewing doughboys scattered 'hi's' [sic] and 'babe's' [sic] throughout the house and 'cutting a rug' in the lounge to that ultimate vulgarity, jazz music, many parents instructed their daughters to have nothing to do with the Americans. There were to be no exemptions, even for officers who looked like Cary Grant and sounded like Clark Gable.'<sup>39</sup> But there were other young Americans, equally as handsome and dashing, but possessing a different set of values to those portrayed in Hollywood and, in fact, more strongly opposed to secular American pop culture than the mothers of those girls who may have seen them as a threat to their daughters' purity.

Both the Church of the Nazarene and the Wesleyan Methodist Church gained their initial impetus through contact with such American service personnel during the latter stages of the war. Australian Christian leaders with a desire to see Wesleyan-Holiness work commence in Australia provided the earliest leadership after contact with Americans who sparked off the interest. The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America began work in Australia in 1945, when

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 105-6.

<sup>37</sup> Darian-Smith in Beaumont, pp. 73-4.

<sup>38</sup> Thompson and Macklin, pp. 1-2.

<sup>39</sup> Barker and Jackson, p. 93.

RAAF chaplain Kingsley Ridgway, after meeting a Wesleyan Methodist serviceman in the Pacific,<sup>40</sup> offered himself as a 'field representative' for the Australian work. The young soldier gave a clear-cut testimony to 'entire sanctification' and this was just the kind of thing that would have filled Ridgway with memories of his days in the Canadian holiness movement, into which he had married in 1929. Approaching the young serviceman he found that he was a Wesleyan Methodist of the more 'radical' type, represented by Conferences such as Allegheny and Ohio, and by God's Bible School in Cincinnati. This did not faze him however as he knew the radical wing of the holiness movement well, and though aware of its extremes, recognized it as his own spiritual 'homeland.'<sup>41</sup>



Kingsley Ridgway, 1942 (family photograph)

In a similar way, 35 year old Australian Army officer, Albert Berg came into contact with the Church of the Nazarene. Though Melbourne was the first city to see a large-scale arrival of GIs, garrisoning 30 000 by early 1942, by September of the following year,

<sup>40</sup> This meeting did not take place in Melbourne as recorded in Ira Ford McLeister and Roy S. Nicholson, *Conscience and Commitment: The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America* (Marion, Indiana: The Wesley Press, 1976), p. 436. The exact identity of this serviceman is unknown. A certain Theron Colgrove was one American Wesleyan who had met Kingsley Ridgway in the Pacific at this time. Colgrove later migrated to Australia where he became part of the fledgling Wesleyan work there for a time. He eventually settled in Queensland, adopting a 'British-Israelite' theology and taking the Hebrew name of Abraham Kol. He died in April 1992. Allen Hall to Miss H. Colgrove, 25 April, 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Glen O'Brien, *Pioneer with a Passion: Kingsley Ridgway-His Life and Legacy* (Melbourne: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1996), p. 59.

after MacArthur transferred his HQ to Brisbane, 96 000 of the 119 000 American soldiers in Australia were stationed there.<sup>42</sup> Brisbane in 1942 was 'a frightened city invaded by a friendly, though foreign, army.'<sup>43</sup>

Ted Hollingsworth, a Nazarene licensed minister from Little Rock, Arkansas, contracted a tropical disease while serving with the US Army Medical Corps in New Guinea. After a period in the military hospital in Townsville he was moved to Brisbane, where after two months recovering this handsome young zealot was back on his feet and searching around for a place to worship. Through the Gospel Book Depot in downtown Brisbane, he came into contact with the Mount Pleasant Gospel Hall (Plymouth Brethren). Here he met Berg, and others who were attracted by Hollingsworth's testimony to entire sanctification.



Meredith T (Ted) Hollingsworth c. 1946  
(photo: Nazarene Archives)

The 'soldier boy',<sup>44</sup> preached on holiness at the Gospel Hall, urging the people there 'not to rest short of...the sure knowledge of a personal Pentecost.'<sup>45</sup> Berg had in fact now met three different

<sup>42</sup> Darian-Smith in Beaumont, p. 72.

<sup>43</sup> Thompson and Macklin, p. viii.

<sup>44</sup> Pinch, 'Memoirs,' p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Mendell Taylor, *Fifty Years of Nazarene Missions: Vol. III World Outreach Through Home Missions* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1958), pp. 68-9.

American servicemen who were members of the Church of the Nazarene, though the identity of the others is unknown.<sup>46</sup> When Hollingsworth returned to America, after being discharged from the Army, he enrolled at Bethany-Peniel College, but did not forget his time in Australia. He prepared a report for presentation to the Board of General Superintendents, who enthusiastically approved the idea of establishing a Nazarene presence in Australia. Meanwhile, independent of these actions, the June 1944 Convention of the Nazarene Young People's Society (NYPS) adopted a resolution to raise \$50,000 over a four year period 'for the evangelization of Australia and New Zealand.'<sup>47</sup> Appeals to the American church for funds presented a view of Australia as being either without Christ or at least without any holiness witness. It was viewed as a harvest field that was ripe for a revival of holiness religion.<sup>48</sup> The Michigan Nazarene Young People's Society urged its constituents to 'Beat Southern California! [in a missions fund raising drive] and give Christ to Australia.'<sup>49</sup>

American Nazarenes seemed unaware of the history of revivalism in Australia and there was a tendency to interpret Australian religious history in extremely bleak terms.<sup>50</sup> Nelson Mink maintained that 'Australia has not had any great revival or evangelical background, such as other British Commonwealth nations have enjoyed.'<sup>51</sup> When General Superintendent, Dr. G. B. Williamson visited Australia at the end of 1951 he claimed in his report that there had been no effective Holiness ministry in Australia in the thirty-five years prior to the establishment of the Church of the Nazarene. This is certainly an overstatement. Holiness teaching was not as widely forgotten or neglected among Methodists as the Holiness people thought it to be. It is understandable that, coming as they did largely from Brethren

<sup>46</sup> Ralph Earle, *Fields Afar: Nazarene Missions in the Far East, India, and the South Pacific* (Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, 1969), pp. 120.

<sup>47</sup> J. Fred Parker, *Mission to the World: A History of Missions in the Church of the Nazarene through 1985* (Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, 1988), p. 586.

<sup>48</sup> 'Facts and Figures of the Land Down Under,' *District N.Y.P.S. [Nazarene Young People's Society] Missionary News* Vol. 1. No. 1 July 1945, Kansas City: Nazarene Archives.

<sup>49</sup> Rally poster for Michigan NYPS meeting, 1946?, Kansas City: Nazarene Archives.

<sup>50</sup> R. Franklin Cook, *Water from Deep Wells* (Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, 1977), p. 156.

<sup>51</sup> Nelson G. Mink, *Southern Cross Salute* (Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, 1969), p. 11.

and Baptist backgrounds, early Australian Nazarenes were encountering holiness as something entirely new. More conservative Methodists, Pentecostals, and those involved in the Keswick Convention movement were all aware of and promoting varieties of 'holiness' teaching in their own ways. Nonetheless, as McEwan points out, for these early Nazarene pioneers, the absence of Holiness teaching in Australia was at least 'subjectively' true, and the hostility they received from other churches could only confirm their suspicions.<sup>52</sup>

### V. 'The Oddities of the Yank Department': Differing Religious Origins and Styles

Holiness religion was different in its expression from more mainstream Christianity. Many of these differences were perceived as 'American' and thus proved a sticking point for some enquirers as the Wesleyan-Holiness churches sought to find a place in the existing religious scene.

It is a commonplace that Australia's first settlers were not the religious idealists that made up America's first parishes. According to Carey, 'in terms of church-going, deference to clerical authority, and acquaintance with theological principles, the convicts of Botany Bay made a poor showing.'<sup>53</sup> According to Mol, since the nineteenth century, at least, 'Australians were born into a religion rather than changed by it, as happened in particular episodes of American history.'<sup>54</sup> This view of Australian Christianity as lacking the 'charismatic events' which characterized American revivalism, however, has recently been challenged by historians who have researched significant periods of religious revival in places like the Victorian gold fields and the coal mining communities of the Hunter Valley.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> David B. McEwan, 'An Examination of the Correspondence (1944-48) Relating to the Founding of the Church of the Nazarene in Australia.' An unpublished paper submitted to Professor Raser in partial fulfilment of the course requirements for *History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1984), p. 39.

<sup>53</sup> Hilary M. Carey, *Believing in Australia: A Cultural History of Religions* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996) p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Hans Mol, *Religion in Australia: A Sociological Investigation* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1971), p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Cp. Stuart Piggin, 'Towards a Theoretical Understanding of Revival: Recent Developments in the Historiography of Revival,'; Rowland Ward, 'Spiritual Awakenings

Gary Bouma has characterised Australia's religious style as 'military chaplaincy' religion, which has its roots in the colonial experience.<sup>56</sup> According to this view, the military and landowning classes in colonial Australia looked on religion as something done for one by a religious professional. This is significantly different from the evangelical Protestant voluntarism that prevails in the United States, in which one takes personal responsibility for one's religious commitment and activism. Similarly, Mol contends that 'religious affiliation seems for a significant number of Australians to be 'ascriptive,' that is something one is born with. Contrary to the USA, where in Protestantism the 'voluntarism' of religious affiliation is stressed, to belong does not imply that one supports the religious institution with one's time and talents.'<sup>57</sup>

But this older view is open to question. For one thing Anglican evangelicalism of the 'Methodistical' variety characterized much of the religious ethos of early Australia, bringing with it the voluntarist ethic. Indeed, Carey goes so far as to say that evangelicalism was 'the religious success story of the Australian colonies.'<sup>58</sup> Richard Johnson and Samuel Marsden were both evangelicals, and because of the absence of non-conformist sects, at least in the earliest period, the evangelical Anglicans were not threatened by much religious competition. This meant that they were 'keener and more visible in their practice of religion than most other Christians and accordingly they were able to set the colonial religious agenda.'<sup>59</sup>

Australian religious expression has always been notably more muted than in North America. During the debate over whether to insert a

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in Scottish Gaelic Communities in Australia, 1837-1870,' Bob James, 'Lots of Religion and Freemasonry: the Politics of Revivalism During the 1930s Depression on the Northern Coalfields,' in Mark Hutchinson et al, eds. *Reviving Australia: Essays on the History and Experience of Revival in Australian Christianity*. Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994.; Stewart Piggin, 'The History of Revival in Australia,' in Mark Hutchinson and Edmund Campion, eds. *Re-Visioning Australian Colonial Christianity: New Essays in the Australian Christian Experience 1788-1900*. Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994.

<sup>56</sup> Gary D. Bouma, 'Assessing Trends in the Position, Strength and Role of Religion in Australian Society,' in R.S.M. Withycombe, ed., *Australia and New Zealand Religious History 1788-1988* (Canberra: Joint Conference of Australia and New Zealand Theological Schools and Society of Theological Studies, 1988) pp. 44-85.

<sup>57</sup> Mol, *Religion in Australia*, p. 237.

<sup>58</sup> Carey, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

clause in the Australian Constitution which would recognize a reliance on 'the blessing of Almighty God,' the Tasmanian Adye Douglas, in opposing such a clause, asserted that '[While] we all rely upon...God in our daily transactions, we do not talk about it.' He informed the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1898 that the Lord's Prayer was at one time used in the Tasmanian Legislative Council but that 'it had become a matter of such indifference that the custom was given up.' When Alexander Peacock made the point that the Lord's Prayer was used in the Victorian Legislative Council, Alfred Deakin quipped, 'And nearly all the members know it now,' presumably meaning that they had not known it before its introduction!<sup>60</sup> Douglas then gave testimony that he was 'ordinarily as religious as any member of this Convention,' and then added, 'I do not make a parade of it.'<sup>61</sup> It might be argued that Douglas' reticence to display his religious convictions typifies Australian religiosity. If so, this stands in stark contrast to a more demonstrative American religious style.

Nazarenes believed that Australians were more receptive to American ideas and practices than to British ones.<sup>62</sup> But Australian church leaders, as well as the general populace were often suspicious of American denominations. Even Nazarene leaders recognised that there were differences in style between American and Australian Christians and that these had the potential to cause difficulties. The 'oddities of the yank deportment' were something Australians would find hard to understand.<sup>63</sup> Some would-be American visitors had received a courteous 'no' from Berg because of the element of risk involved in their ability to adjust to 'our local psychology.'<sup>64</sup> As much as possible, Australian and American workers should labour side by side so as to learn from each other.<sup>65</sup> As much as possible promotional material is to reflect a peculiarly Australian ethos. It

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<sup>60</sup> Though Deakin may be commenting on the members' illiteracy, rather than their irreligion.

<sup>61</sup> Constitutional debate, Melbourne, 1898, Vol. 2, 1739-40 in Ely, pp. 72-3.

<sup>62</sup> P. L. Beals, *Report to the Board of General Superintendents*, 9 January 1939 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives), p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> Albert Berg to Ted Hollingsworth, no date, but replying to a letter of Hollingsworth dated 6 June 1946 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Albert Berg to I. F. Younger, 26 September 1962 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives).

<sup>65</sup> Arthur A. Clarke, letter to Ted Hollingsworth, 10 October 1946 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives), p. 2.

should reflect the Nazarene message 'in a true Australian fashion.'<sup>66</sup> At the same time, Berg sees the Nazarene constituency as 'Nazarene firstly and Australians secondly.'<sup>67</sup>

When EE Zachary arrived from the United States in 1946 to chair the first Nazarene Assembly, the 'peculiarities' of his style of preaching were seen by Pinch as something that the people needed 'the Lord's help' to 'rise above.' The 'altar call,' (kneeling at an altar of prayer in a public meeting) so typical of American revivalism, seemed something of a novelty.<sup>68</sup> When Dr. Weaver Hess, Oregon District Superintendent, preached in Sydney in January 1948, the tears that rolled down his cheeks were perhaps indicative of the approach to preaching among American revivalists, but were not immediately intelligible to the average Australian evangelical, whose expressions were characteristically more reserved. Pinch recalls upon seeing these tears, 'We Australians were unaccustomed to this.'<sup>69</sup>

According to David Bennett, when the altar call first emerged in British Methodism early in the nineteenth century 'it was dubbed 'the American custom.' Thus it was perceived as an import, rather than a home bred practice, and was certainly not seen as a strategy used by the English founder of Methodism.'<sup>70</sup> As a distinct and intentionally planned system it seems to have had its beginnings in the American camp meeting revivals in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Bennet concludes that 'Methodists seem to have been its only regular users until the 1870s. From then it was promoted to a wider audience by various itinerant evangelists, but there is little evidence of it being widely used in denominations of non-Methodist origins in the nineteenth century.'<sup>72</sup> What use, or memory, of this practice there may have been among evangelicals of the 1940s is uncertain but the fact that those in early Nazarene meetings encountered it as a novelty seems to suggest that it was not a widespread practice.

<sup>66</sup> Albert Berg to Ted Hollingsworth, 25 January 1946 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives), p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Albert Berg to G. B. Williamson, 7 June 1949 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives).

<sup>68</sup> Pinch, p. 38.

<sup>69</sup> Cook, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> David Bennet, *The Altar Call: Its Origins and Present Usage* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Bennet, p. 79.

<sup>72</sup> Bennet, p. 157.

American servicemen in Geraldton found themselves without Coca Cola, a drink not known in WA at the time. They did, however, have a supply of the syrup available so they struck a deal with a local soft drink manufacturer to add the carbonated water and begin local production.<sup>73</sup> There may be a metaphor here for religious importation. Certain forms of religious expression may be imported from America on a global scale, and yet they soon begin to be produced locally as well, blending local distinctives with the original 'product' to produce home grown varieties. Yuri Lotman has proposed a five stage model of cultural importation which begins with the assumption that cultural imports are superior to local product, and then moves through various stages of engagement and modification between local and imported cultural expression, culminating in local culture defining itself with little reference to outside cultural influences, ready to transmit meaning on its own terms.<sup>74</sup> Australian evangelicals did not so much find the altar call something 'superior' but they did accept it and incorporate it into their own practices until it was no longer seen as, or even remembered as, an American import.

Neither the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America nor the Church of the Nazarene perceived their Australian work as a mission field. Perhaps because of the similarity that existed between the two cultures, the new work 'down under' came under the jurisdiction of the 'Home' rather than 'Foreign' Missions department. The Rev. JR Swauger, visiting Secretary of Home Missions, was present to chair the first Conference of the 'Wesleyan Methodist Church of America in Australia.'<sup>75</sup> A letter of greeting was read from the General Conference President in America, the Rev. Roy S. Nicholson. Ridgway referred to Swauger's coming as 'a great blessing to the Wesleyan cause in Australia, and we are assured the interests of Australia will be well represented by him in the councils of the home church.'<sup>76</sup> It may seem unusual that the Church in America should be referred to as the 'home church' when nobody at the Conference,

<sup>73</sup> Barker and Jackson, p. 118.

<sup>74</sup> Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Indiana University Press, 1990), in Bell and Bell, *Americanization*, p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> His written account of the visit, taken from travel journal entries, was kindly copied and made available by the Rev. Swauger's grandson, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Dongell.

<sup>76</sup> 'Conference President's Report,' (*Minutes of the Annual Conference, Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1947*), p. 7.



apart from Swauger, could call America 'home.' Ridgway was also able to refer to the American Church as 'the parent church'<sup>77</sup> and the Committee on Resolutions even spoke of the 'Mother Church.'<sup>78</sup>

Yet the obvious American influence does not seem to have been exerted in an overly controlling sense. From the beginning the need to indigenize was encouraged and pursued. The *Australian Wesleyan* was founded as 'the official organ' of the Church at a Special Session of the 1947 Conference, with Kingsley Ridgway as editor.<sup>79</sup> This was followed by the *Wesleyan Witness*, later to be discontinued in favour of the American publication the *Wesleyan Methodist*, which was sent to subscribers only, and initially drew a poor response.<sup>80</sup> *The Australian Nazarene* served a similar function. Berg stressed the importance of Australian material in a letter to G. B. Williamson, Nazarene General Superintendent. '[A]rticles written [for the pages of *The Australian Nazarene*] by American or any other Nazarenes are well accepted. But I am working on a greater percentage of articles written by Australian Nazarenes and appreciate your understanding attitude in this connection.'<sup>81</sup>

In 1949, after thanking the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America for its generosity toward the Australian Bible College, Kingsley Ridgway asserted the need for a self-supporting work to emerge. 'We cannot expect...that financial help on such a munificent scale will continue. Let it be our earnest endeavour to make our work self-supporting; and that as readily as possible.'<sup>82</sup> The *Light and Life* radio programme was in use by Wesleyans from 1954. This was 'canned' material from the Free Methodist Church, a sister holiness body in the United States, and so the public voice of the Church was an American one. This quarter-hour programme was broadcast each Sunday morning at 8.30 on 3XY.<sup>83</sup> The Nazarenes also used 'canned' material for their radio broadcasts. 'Of course,' wrote Berg, 'we have to omit references to the U. S. in any material we publish and often are not able to broadcast a 'Showers of Blessing' programme in so far

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> 'Report of the Committee on Resolutions,' (*Minutes* 1947), p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Minutes*, 1947, 15. Unfortunately, it then seems to drop out of the record until much later.

<sup>80</sup> 'Literature Secretary's Report,' (*Minutes* 1953), p. 66.

<sup>81</sup> Albert Berg to G. B. Williamson, 7 June 1949 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives).

<sup>82</sup> 'Conference President's Report,' *Minutes of the Australia Mission Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America*, 1949.

<sup>83</sup> *Minutes* 1954, p. 101.

as it directly concerns the American nation and this would sound very strange to Australian people.'<sup>84</sup>

The Rev. Roy S. Nicholson, Wesleyan Methodist Conference President, visited the Australian church in 1953 and conducted a series of meetings in three states. As Nicholson sat in the Botanical gardens, in the shade of Government House, during Christmas week, the mercury rose to 100 degrees, and a strong hot breeze was blowing.<sup>85</sup> Christmas Day and the day following were also very hot. The winter snows of his home in Indiana must have seemed a long way off. In his final report from Australia, he gave his summary conclusions of the situation in Australia.

This continent needs the Wesleyan message of full deliverance from sin...Formal religion is in evidence everywhere, and those with a spiritual hunger seem to suspect the denominational programs, many of which are shot through with theological liberalism and worldliness. That fact has encouraged hundreds of independent groups who hold 'fellowship' meetings apart from all denominational contacts...God had vindicated us and those who feared our intentions (which had been misrepresented to them) have discovered that instead of being heretics out to spread error, we are earnest Christians seeking the lost. Some of them welcome us as 'fellow helpers to the truth,' but, of course, with some others there is no fellowship or co-operation, because our views or essential doctrines and principles are so far apart. In Australia, as in many other lands, it costs one something to separate from an older church group and affiliate with a definitely holiness group. *It is doubly costly to unite with one having the ties to American leadership that our Church has.* We are gaining favour, however, with those who have become well enough acquainted with us to appreciate our principles, purposes and practices.<sup>86</sup>

According to Stuart Piggin, the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade saw Australia come 'closest to experiencing a national spiritual awakening' than at any other time. One quarter of the entire population of Australia and New Zealand attended a Graham crusade meeting. In many ways, the involvement by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of

<sup>84</sup> Albert Berg to G. B. Williamson, 7 June 1949 (Kansas City: Nazarene Archives).

<sup>85</sup> Roy S. Nicholson, 'Christmas Week in Australia', *Wesleyan Methodist*, Vol. 112:6 (Feb 9 1955), p. 3. During the Annual Wesleyan Youth Camp in the Dandenongs that January the temperature reached 105 degrees.

<sup>86</sup> Roy S. Nicholson, 'The Last Week in Australia', *Wesleyan Methodist*, Vol. 112:7 (Feb 16, 1955), p. 3. Emphasis my own.

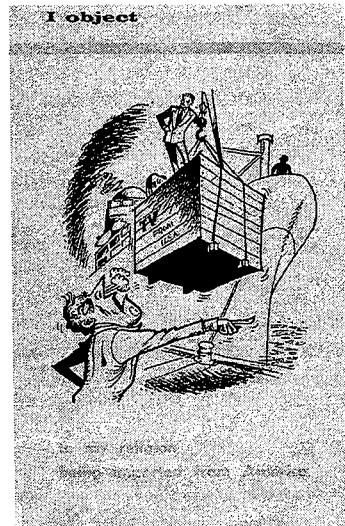
Australia in the Graham Crusade was a watershed moment in the history of that church. The Wesleyans had been the only denominational member of the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches of Australia (FECA), a fundamentalist conglomerate of small independent churches, which followed Carl MacIntyre's lead in the US in boycotting Billy Graham's ministry. In refusing to boycott Graham, and breaking ranks with the FECA, the Wesleyan Methodists in a sense, 'came of age,' choosing to throw in their lot with mainstream evangelicalism, over against reactionary fundamentalism. Graham had himself broken with the extremist fundamentalist wing back home, shortly before coming to Australia. He received strong mainline church support here as he did in the US.<sup>87</sup>



A young Billy Graham c. 1950 (Photo: Billy Graham Centre, Wheaton College); *I Object...to Billy Graham* was a pamphlet produced by Howard Guinness, rector of St. Michael's Church of England in Vauluse, as an *apologia* for the Graham Crusades, with cartoons drawn by Benier. One of the objections it sought to answer was 'I object to my religion being imported from America.'

The *Standing Orders* of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of 1958 urged that 'each pastor and charge enter wholeheartedly and energetically into the visitation programme of the Billy Graham

<sup>87</sup> Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996) pp. 325-37.



Crusade.<sup>88</sup> Conference President Robert Mattke was able to speak of the Crusade as having a 'spiritual impact...upon [the] continent' and urged that Wesleyans 'do everything humanly possible to follow through with every contact. Let us make the most of this historic opportunity.'<sup>89</sup> Kingsley Ridgway represented the Wesleyans on the Executive Committee of the Billy Graham crusade in Victoria. He thanked God for 'the great door and effectual' which the campaign had opened for Wesleyans in that state.<sup>90</sup> In the wake of the event, Mattke spoke of the Crusade as having brought to Australia 'a spiritual atmosphere which was probably unique to [its] history...[bringing] to the masses a certain awareness of God.'<sup>91</sup>

Piggin sees Australians as displaying an uncritical disposition toward all things American during the 1950s, as America 'began to replace Britain in the affections of Australians.'<sup>92</sup> At the final Crusade, Graham read a greeting from President Eisenhower which was warmly received. Along with this came a diplomatic letter from Richard Nixon. Graham was a well known anti-Communist, considered to be a powerful ally on the American side of the Cold War. All of this resonated well in the anti-communist atmosphere of Australia at the time. Anti-American sentiment waned in Australia, in the post-war period, especially on the part of conservative intellectuals. American culture was far to be preferred to those totalitarianisms which threatened the peace of the 'free world.' Left wing intellectuals, on the other hand, saw the day coming when Australia would be just another American province.<sup>93</sup> The perception, on the part of the left, of a sudden move toward American cultural influences was unfounded, according to Waterhouse, since

<sup>88</sup> Standing Order 18, (*Minutes of the Annual Conference*, 1958), p. 250. Strangely the Nazarene Assembly Minutes for 1958, 1959, and 1960 have no mention of the Graham crusades at all. Mrs. Miriam Midgely, at that time a member of the Church of the Nazarene, recalled that as a member of that Church she was not permitted to serve as 'counselor' at the crusades, the Nazarenes not being a recognized denomination by the organizers.

<sup>89</sup> Conference President's Report, (*Minutes* 1958), p. 260.

<sup>90</sup> Vice-President's Report, (*Minutes* 1958), p. 262.

<sup>91</sup> Conference President's Report, (*Minutes* 1960), p. 12.

<sup>92</sup> Stuart Piggin, 'The American and British Contributions to Evangelicalism in Australia,' in Mark A. Noll, David Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 299.

<sup>93</sup> Richard Waterhouse, 'Popular Culture,' in Bell and Bell, *Americanization*, p. 47.

Americanisation had been a part of the cultural scene in Australia since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>94</sup>

As Wesleyan-Holiness churches sought to move from 'outsider' to 'insider' status they have tended to reflect those broader aspects of Americanization that have been integrated into Australian evangelicalism, and to minimize those that have not. When the Graham-style altar call was being used by Anglicans, Baptists, and Presbyterians, in the post Crusade era of the early 1960s, Wesleyan-Holiness use of this device would be far less conspicuous, and would not mark them out as a 'fringe' group. On the other hand, more uniquely 'Holiness' expressions, such as waving of the handkerchief in the air as a sign of being 'blessed,' or shouting 'glory!' were minimized in Holiness churches, partly because such behaviours were identified with Pentecostals, a group from which the Holiness people were keen to distance themselves.

#### VI. 'Sheep Stealers' and 'Sinless Perfectionists'

In spite of the good will generated by Graham, anti-American sentiment among Australian evangelicals survived at least into the 1970s as is clear from the experience of members of the Church of God (Cleveland) and the Church of God (Anderson) who entered the Australian scene in 1973 and 1960 respectively. Pioneer Church of God (Cleveland) missionaries Bill and Winnie McAlpin were not well received by other Christians who considered them 'sheep stealers.' Even among the Pentecostal churches they were viewed as outsiders.<sup>95</sup> The lack of cooperation from other Christians made their work more difficult. Not only was there no denominational connection, and little fellowship with others, they were told in no uncertain terms that they were not welcome in Australia. Viewed as being 'sinless perfectionists,' whose presence was detrimental to the Christian cause, they were urged to 'denounce' their affiliation with the American church.<sup>96</sup>

The Church of God (Cleveland) seemed neither fish nor fowl. It belonged to the Pentecostal-Holiness family of churches, a group of churches that emerged in the Southern United States, whose

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, pp. 48-50.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Winnie McAlpin, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Bill McAlpin, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

Appalachian expression of religion was markedly more frantic than in the North. The precursors of modern-day Pentecostalism, they adopted a 'three-stage' way of salvation, seeing 'speaking in tongues' as a sign of a special 'baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire,' subsequent to both conversion and entire sanctification.<sup>97</sup> The churches the McAlpins sought to associate with in Australia, and which kept them at arms length, were Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God. There was no involvement at all with Wesleyan-Holiness groups.<sup>98</sup> The Pentecostals would not associate with them because they were considered too Holiness, and the Holiness churches would not associate with them because they were too Pentecostal.<sup>99</sup> There was theological opposition to the doctrine of sanctification held by the Church of God on the part of other Pentecostals, who believed them to be not quite orthodox and too rigid in their lifestyle prohibitions.

Harold McLoud, General Overseer of the Australian work from 1984 to 1995, found that he gained greater acceptance among some Uniting Church and Catholic churches than from the Assemblies of God, which seemed to have held the Church of God at arms length because it was perceived as an American group in competition with it. As a result, Church of God leaders were not invited to participate in any multi-church crusades or organizing committees.<sup>100</sup> The fact that the Church of God did not fit neatly into either the Holiness or the Pentecostal camp, meant that one aspect of its self identification would inevitably be muted if it was to find its place among the existing churches in Australia.

The history of the Church of God (Cleveland) in Australia is marked by a striking ethnic diversity. Members of Church of God congregations in other countries would emigrate from their home countries and establish congregations in their new homeland soon after arrival in Australia.<sup>101</sup> Like the Church of the Nazarene, the Church of God (Cleveland) attracted significant numbers of

<sup>97</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1971; Donald W. Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1987.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Bill McAlpin, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Harold McLoud, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> This 'reverse missionary' pattern which saw immigrant groups evangelise the countries they entered, was a global pattern in the Church of the God as described in Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army: A History of the Church of God 1886-1995* (Cleveland, Tennessee: Pathway Press, 1996), pp. 503-4.

Aboriginal Australians into its ranks. Tent meetings were regularly held amongst Aboriginal communities in rural New South Wales from 1979 and throughout the 1980s.<sup>102</sup> By 1991 the New Testament Church of God (as it was then known in Australia) had grown from one family to a total of 21 churches and missions and approximately 1300 members. The Church of God website currently includes 35 churches.<sup>103</sup> Here is a church energetically established by American, Aboriginal, White Australian, Fijian, Romanian, Spanish, and Filipino congregations who seemed able, despite their cultural differences, to unite. Perhaps their unity, in spite of the divergence of their cultures arose out of a shared sense of dislocation, as well as a shared religious experience.

Paul Brodwin has traced the manner in which members of the Haitian diaspora in the US gathered into Pentecostal churches, which provided 'a form of collective defense and remoralizing' that protected against a loss of social cohesion in the face of the temptations of secularism.<sup>104</sup> Harold McLoud recalled that the immigrant Church of God congregations in Australia held much stricter views than American Church of God adherents on things such as dress codes, use of alcohol and tobacco, and the prohibiting of 'worldly' entertainment.<sup>105</sup> In Brodwin's study, the immigrant Haitians tended to reflect the more conservative features of earlier formative Pentecostalism. Immigrant Church of God communities in Australia would seem to bear out this thesis.

Perhaps the growth of the Church of God (Cleveland) was also enhanced by the fact that the immigrant communities did not necessarily share the anti-American sentiment of many Australians. Winnie McAlpin remembers that her husband Bill's style of pulpit ministry was totally different to the Australian style and that he made no effort to change. According to Mrs. McAlpin, preaching style at that time in Australia was more muted than in America. It was 'more like a Sunday School teacher...teaching rather than preaching...[in

<sup>102</sup> Winnie McAlpin, 'Where God's Finger Points: The Church of God 'Down Under'' (typewritten manuscript copied at the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Cleveland, Tennessee), p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.cogaus.com/nzaus.html>

<sup>104</sup> Paul Brodwin, 'Pentecostalism and the Production of Community in the Haitian Diaspora,' Discussion Paper No. 90 (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin, 2000), pp. 23-5.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Harold McLoud, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

preaching] the American manner was a little more demonstrative, a little more forceful...that was...a little bit frightening to some people coming in seeing this vast difference. Some people really loved it. Some people were scared to death.'<sup>106</sup>

When the McAlpins held evangelistic meetings in Busselton WA soon after their arrival in Australia, some of the members of this conservative rural farming community of about 10,000 people disapproved of the emotionalism of the meetings. When about 20 children were 'moved to tears of repentance' at an altar service some parents withdrew their involvement. Attendances after that were small.<sup>107</sup> Bill was told, 'We've heard about you American preachers. You have some sort of powder that you put on the kids. It affects them and makes them do crazy things. We didn't see you but you must have done that.'<sup>108</sup> The Church of God had the practice of a 'concert of prayer,' during which everybody prayed out loud all at once. Australians didn't appreciate this practice, thinking it was fanaticism. When asked whether there was anti-American sentiment on the part of Australians, the McAlpins answered strongly in the affirmative.<sup>109</sup> Harold McLoud also found it important not to wear his American identity on his sleeve.<sup>110</sup>

Malcolm Hughes remembers the strength of the opposition to the Church of God (Anderson).<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Bill and Winnie McAlpin, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

<sup>107</sup> Winnie McAlpin, 'Where God's Finger Points,' p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Bill and Winnie McAlpin, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Harold McLoud, Cleveland, Tennessee, July 2001.

<sup>111</sup> The Church of God (Anderson) commenced work in Australia in 1917 under E. P. May but this work did not develop well and the church re-entered much later, in 1960 led by Carl and Lova Swart. The Association of the Church of God in Australia is the least successful of the Wesleyan-Holiness groups in Australia. The reasons for this have yet to be fully investigated but one possible answer is that the church remained aloof from other Christians and thus could not find the resources to sustain itself in an unfriendly environment. In 1995 there were 6 small churches in Australia and about 200 adherents, the same number as a decade earlier. Ward and Humphreys, 138. The website currently list 3 churches and 1 'fellowship.' <http://home.iprimus.com.au/lenbradley/page4.html>. See Malcolm T. Hughes, *Seeds of Faith: A History of the Church of God Reformation Movement in Australia Part One*. Englewood, Ohio: self-published, 1995; Harold Chilver, 'My Heart Set Aflame, in Barry L. Callen, ed. *Following the Light: Teachings, Testimonies, Trials, and Triumphs of the Church of God Movement (Anderson) - A Documentary History* (Anderson, Indiana: Warner Press, 2000), pp. 116-17.

We were often misunderstood, and...viewed as another one of those strange American cults, sects, and at that time there were...a lot of problems...with people being kidnapped and taken into cults, and all of that sort of thing, and there was all the rescuing and deprogramming going on, and so forth, and I think that when you put the sign on the door that said Church of God, primarily a lot of people assumed that we were another one of those strange groups, and it took a lot of one on one communication, a lot of convincing, that we...really had very little to differ from Methodist and Church of Christ people and a lot of other Wesleyan groups, that we have a lot of the same roots.<sup>112</sup>

### VII. American Imperialism or the Production of Modernity?

Were the Wesleyan-Holiness churches examples of a kind of American religious imperialism? Or were they authentically Australian religious communities who looked to the United States as an older sibling able to give them a head start and provide connection to a broader international community?

The question of whether the charge of 'American imperialism' is a valid one lies at the heart of Bell and Bell's treatment of 'Americanization.' Where Philip Adams and Donald Horne raise concerns about Australia being a victim of both British and American imperialism, Bell and Bell contend that Australia's relationship with America is 'embedded in more general processes of modernization and globalization.'<sup>113</sup> Charges of American cultural and political 'imperialism' are often simplistic and often overstated.<sup>114</sup> Those things labelled as instances of the 'Americanization' of society and culture may in fact be no more than examples of cross-cultural and internationalist modernisation. Modern nations such as Australia, share with the United States, and other nations, in an emerging global culture, some aspects of which might be expressed in ways seen to be 'American' but whose American origins are only secondary to their significance as expressions of a global movement.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Judy and Malcolm Hughes, Anderson, Indiana, 13 July 2001.

<sup>113</sup> Phillip Bell and Roger Bell, *Implicated: The United States in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. xii.

<sup>114</sup> Bell and Bell, 'Introduction: The Dilemmas of Americanization,' in *Americanization and Australia*, p. 5.

Giles Keppel points to the way in which 'evangelical movements...have been denigrated as representing the obscurantism of a bygone age' and resists this 'widespread view' as 'quite inadequate.' Conservative religious groups contain, he says 'a high proportion of people, young or not so young, who have been through a secular education, with a marked bias toward the technical disciplines.' They have 'habits of thought acquired in schools which are themselves the product *par excellence* of the modernity whose course they now wish to alter.' They are those 'intellectuals of a proletariat cast' spoken of by Max Weber, who conclude in the final analysis that 'the modernism produced by reason without God has not succeeded in creating values.'<sup>115</sup> In 1960 only 7% of American evangelicals had a university education. By the mid-70s that number had grown to 23%.<sup>116</sup>

Conservative Christians are not anti-modern. They avail themselves fully of the technologies and modes of discourse produced by the contemporary era.<sup>117</sup> They are not Luddites raging against the machine, but are making the machine serve their own ends. They are moderns, but are not modernists. A modernist is *at home* in the shifting realities of modernity; modern evangelicals are not really at home but 'passing through' to another land. To the extent that they settle down more comfortably in the land through which they are passing, they lower their tension and move to the church end of the church-sect continuum. Australian evangelicalism is one form of that modernity (or perhaps postmodernity) of which America is another. According to Appadurai and Breckenridge, most of today's societies 'possess the means for the local production of modernity.'<sup>118</sup> Australia, then, need not be seen as the target of Americanisation, but as a creative partner in a dance of mutually enriching postmodern cultural expressions.

However much evidence might confound the 'Los-Angelization of the world' hypothesis, the anti-American sentiment that formed much of

<sup>115</sup> Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), pp. 4-5.

<sup>116</sup> Kepel, *The Revenge of God*, p. 124.

<sup>117</sup> Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), p. 1.

<sup>118</sup> Bell and Bell, *Americanization*, pp. 10, 12. See also, Bell and Bell, *Implicated*, p. 7.

the resistance to Wesleyan-Holiness churches was real and would only begin to be broken down as broader evangelicalism itself became Americanized in the wake of Billy Graham-style revivalism.

Piggin sees Anglican evangelicalism's hegemony as a distinctive feature of Australian evangelicalism. Its suspicion and rejection of 'the highly individualistic theology of the indwelling Spirit' is 'a vital point for understanding the differences in the ambience of American and Australian spiritual life.'<sup>119</sup> This is significant, for it is just this 'highly individualistic theology of the indwelling Spirit' that has been a hallmark of the Wesleyan-Holiness churches. The Anglican evangelical establishment has always been opposed to what it has labelled 'sinless perfectionism,' and Piggin sees the retreat into 'second blessing' holiness on the part of some Anglicans at Moore College in the 1950s as an unhealthy response to encroaching liberalism, and as a threat to healthy evangelicalism.<sup>120</sup>

In an earlier essay, Piggin sets out a number of important questions.

Was Australian evangelicalism shaped primarily and definitively at the time of the origins of Australian settlement? Or have exogenous factors constituted the nature of Australian evangelicalism either by continuing to influence it as it grows or by repeatedly reintroducing varieties of it after other implants have died or grown too sickly to reproduce? What have been the patterns of interaction between evangelicalism and social and cultural forces in Australia, and how do they compare with such interactions in Britain and America?<sup>121</sup>

Such a comparative study is not within the scope of this thesis, but it may safely be asserted that 'exogenous factors' have indeed shaped Australian evangelicalism and that one of those factors has been American evangelicalism. David Hilliard has traced the reception of religion in post-war suburbia and found that though suburbanization threatened denominational ties and church attendance, 'the spread of Sunday Schools, outdoor rallies, and American-based evangelism' helped to counter this drift.<sup>122</sup> It is interesting to note that all three of these methods were widely utilized by the Wesleyan-Holiness

<sup>119</sup> Piggin, in Noll, et al, p. 291.

<sup>120</sup> Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, pp. vii-ix, also pp. 105-24.

<sup>121</sup> Piggin, in Noll, et al, p. 291.

<sup>122</sup>

churches. In fact, through much of the early history of the Wesleyans and the Nazarenes, Sunday School attendance in the suburbs far outstripped adult church attendance.<sup>123</sup>

Lotman's model of cultural importation presupposes a fairly stable or even passive 'receiving culture,' which is acted upon by an outside culture perceived as superior to the local product. Australian evangelicalism was no such static culture. It cannot be understood as something 'floating above' or 'suspended over' the cultural, political, and social forces that shaped Australia broadly during this, or any historical period. It may be argued that it was 'Americanised' in the post-war years only to the extent that everything else in Australia was 'Americanised.' The case of the Wesleyan-Holiness churches in Australia differs from Lotman's model in that the cultural import [American evangelicalism] was not at first considered a superior product. In fact, it was viewed with suspicion. The engagement and modification that took place over time, however, led to a gradual tendency to admire American approaches, especially the well-oiled machinery of American evangelistic techniques, and to adopt them in Australia until the American origins were either forgotten or not seen as important.

### Conclusion

It is doubtful that the Wesleyan-Holiness churches themselves have had a significant shaping influence on Australian evangelicalism. They have been too small in number and too marginalized to be granted much leverage. However, they emerged as a new expression of the Holiness impetus that had been present in Australian evangelicalism earlier, primarily through Methodism, and also the Keswick Convention movement, but which had all but died out. As much as they would like to think otherwise, the doctrine and experience of 'entire sanctification' as a second work of grace was not introduced to this country by the American Wesleyan-Holiness churches, though it was revived by them. Other evangelicals influenced by earlier forms of 'Holiness' teaching were drawn to the new Holiness groups because they recognized an echo of this older, but now almost forgotten tradition. These churches were not

<sup>123</sup> See statistical reports in *Church of the Nazarene Australia District Assembly Minutes*, passim. In 1951 adult Wesleyan membership was 55 and Sunday School attendance was 557! Don Hardgrave, *For Such a Time: A History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Australia* (Brisbane: A Pleasant Surprise, 1988), p. 71.

instances of American religious imperialism, but authentic movements of Australian Christians finding in their American cousins willing 'sponsors' who could provide legitimacy for their efforts by links with recognized and established denominations. The fact that these 'sponsoring' denominations were American, far from being seen as an advantage, was seen by Australian and American church leaders alike, as a liability. These groups continued to be marginalized because of their perceived American origins and control. Only as features of American evangelicalism began to be more widely accepted among Australian evangelicals and seen as authentically Australian and not an American import, did the holiness churches become less 'queer' and, as we will see in chapter five, less sect-like.

# THE 'PROBLEM' OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

David Sullivan

## I. Introduction

Calling the differentiated identities of the Trinity 'Persons' raises peculiar sorts of problems, not least because such a term runs the risks of basing the description of the trinitarian identities upon our understanding of human persons. One of the serious difficulties with this approach is that the three trinitarian identities exist as One Being, whilst human persons are separate beings.

So we may ask, how is it that the Holy Spirit exists as a distinct identity within the Trinity, yet exists in one being with the Father and the Son? There is a further specific problem we may raise that is imposed by Scripture. If the spirit is what God is, how can we identify the Holy Spirit specifically as 'the' Spirit of God?<sup>1</sup>

The raising of this particular problem is also important in a religious sense. For example, we may ask whether there is anything distinctive about invoking the Holy Spirit as against invoking God. We would expect that the *trinity* of the Godhead is purposeful and meaningful, and that a monadic or binitarian Godhead is therefore either inconceivable, or at least would have a different purpose and meaning to the trinitarian God. We might put the questions reverently in this way: what difference as against the other members of the Trinity does the Holy Spirit make?

Or we may yet put the matter in another way. In the contemporary world, there is particular attention given to the experience of the Holy Spirit and his work in the world. These experiences are considered to be not only private, nor limited to isolated groups. Christian theology

<sup>1</sup>This problem and the one following are posed by Robert Jenson in his *Systematic Theology Vol 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 146.

# AUSTRALIA.... Land of Challenge

Vol. 1, No. 1      FEB. 1945      THE AUSTRALIAN Nazarene Young People's Society

## Southern California Young People Back Australia Project

Missionary Committee Maps Plans      President's Forum

Right in the eye of the storm... The Southern California Nazarene Young People's Society... Missionary Committee Maps Plans... President's Forum... Report Deadline: Midnight, Oct. 4... Facts and Figures... California vs. Michigan... Eyewitness Account of the Need... Dr. Ganner Gives OK...

Dr. Ganner Gives OK... Eyewitness Account of the Need... Through personal experience... The need for the presence of... Eyewitness Account of the Need... Through personal experience... The need for the presence of...

Nazarene Young People's Society newsletter, 1945 (Nazarene Archives)

claims that the Holy Spirit is at work everywhere in creation, and particularly in and through human agents. Yet, as Michael Welker points out, 'it is often difficult to distinguish the reciprocal relations defined by God's Spirit from other relations between people and between creatures.'<sup>2</sup> Welker raises the questions: why, if God's Spirit is at work in the world with divine force and power, intervening in new and creative ways, why is it that only some parts of the contemporary world recognise this, and others see the Holy Spirit as, at best, a person of the past, or merely as an intellectual construct? How can the Holy Spirit be recognised and defined as a distinct person within the Trinity and within today's world?

These questions are complex and cannot be given full justice within the space of a few pages. Therefore we are compelled to consider some of the more important issues. It is fitting that, as we set out in this discussion, to begin by considering the term 'person' and its appropriateness as applied to the Holy Spirit, and indeed the other identities within the Trinity.

### I. The Term 'Person'

The risk in labelling the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as 'persons' lies in invalidly invoking anthropomorphic metaphors as in some way determinative of the identities of the Trinity. There are clearly fundamental and important differences between the persons of the Trinity and a human person. As noted before, not least of these differences is that the Holy Spirit is of One Being with the Father and the Son, whereas each human person is a separate identity. This oneness is inextricably bound to the deity of the Trinity. There is a difference in *kind* between trinitarian person and human person.

Karl Barth attempted to avoid any confusion incumbent in the term 'person' by speaking of the 'Modes' of the Trinity.<sup>3</sup> However, this term creates a new confusion by being suggestive of the ancient heresy of Modalism. Barth tried to avoid this problem by insisting that the three Modes exist simultaneously rather than successively. However, Barth's attempt is unsuccessful because it fails to give a convincing account of the role of the Holy Spirit as distinct from the Father and

the Son, and his doctrine often appears to be binitarian rather than Trinitarian. For example, as Robert Jenson points out, Barth fails to give any credit to the Holy Spirit as an agent who unites Christ and the church. Jenson writes: 'It is invariably Christ himself who is specified as the agent, with the Spirit denoted only by impersonal terms, as a *capacity* of Christ.'<sup>4</sup> Thus, while Barth wishes to recognise the Spirit as a distinct identity within the Trinity, his theology often seems to fail to give the Spirit that status.

Karl Rahner indicates that he is content to maintain the term 'person' to describe the Trinitarian identities, since it is a term that has lasted and served well for over 1500 years. However, he qualifies his support for the term by speaking of the Trinity as being 'three distinct manners of subsisting,'<sup>5</sup> and avoids any accusations of tritheistic heresy by stating that 'these distinct manners' exist in the One God. It seems that whilst Rahner desires to clarify the term 'person,' he in fact adopts terminology which in itself is not clear.

It is useful and helpful, though perhaps insufficient to think of the Trinity as 'three centres of consciousness,'... 'but that so interpenetrate each other that a oneness of being obtains that does not obtain in the case of three human individuals.'<sup>6</sup> We shall discuss this perspective further at a later stage in this paper. Let us note for the moment that, provided that we are able to maintain our focus that the Trinity is One God, there does not seem to be any valid reason why we should not continue to employ the term 'person' in referring to the Trinity. We now turn our discussion to the particular role of the Holy Spirit as a person distinct from the other identities of the Trinity.

### II. The Role of the Holy Spirit

As we embark upon this section of our task, we do well to begin with the Scriptural evidences which, when examined together, clearly support the belief that the Holy Spirit exists as a distinct divine person. The qualification 'when examined together' is added here because the personhood of the Holy Spirit is not clearly determinate in the Old Testament, though it is revealed in the New Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Kenneth Grider, 'The Triune God,' in *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, edited by Charles Carter, (Salem: Schmul, 1992), p. 400.

<sup>4</sup> Jenson, p. 154.

<sup>5</sup> Grider, p. 401.

<sup>6</sup> Grider, p. 401.



Moreover there is not even one statement in Scripture, and in particular in the New Testament, that teaches that the Trinity comprises three persons. The term 'Trinity' is itself not even to be found in Scripture. Nevertheless, the Scriptural perspective does present the Spirit as a divine and active agent in the world. The Spirit was the divine creative agent, as we read in Genesis 1:1, 2 where the inspired human author wrote the following: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth....and God's Spirit hovered over the waters.' We know that the Spirit is the divine author of the Scriptures, that he was active in the redemptive life and ministry of Jesus, that he empowered Jesus for ministry, sustained and directed him in temptation, and by him Jesus was raised from the dead and is now glorified.

And we also know that the Spirit is present with every believer (John 14:17), that he is our witness that we are children of God, that he is God's gift to us as our advocate and helper (John 14:25), and that he convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). He is also our teacher. Perhaps most importantly of all he points us to Christ, as Christ himself says: 'He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine.' (John 16:14)

This last point is critical in any discussion of the Holy Spirit's personhood, because it establishes the Spirit as being distinct from Christ, yet connected inextricably to Christ. Romans 8:9 speaks of the Spirit of Christ. Elsewhere Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God. Thus, from a biblical perspective, we may note that any understanding of the personhood of the Holy Spirit can only be gained within the context of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the other members of the Trinity. This is the subject of the next section of this paper.

### III. The Holy Spirit within the Trinity

Welker notes the following in one of his articles: 'Whoever is capable of thinking and conceiving of a person only as an individual-human center of action will have to come to terms with the fact that the personhood of the Holy Spirit will simply remain impenetrable.'<sup>7</sup> At

<sup>7</sup> Michael Welker, 'The Holy Spirit,' printed in *Theology Today* Vol 46, No. 1, April 1989, reproduced on the internet as [theologytoday.ptsem.edu/apr1989/v46-1-article1.htm](http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/apr1989/v46-1-article1.htm), p. 11.

another point Welker states that 'the Holy Spirit is perhaps the most difficult person of the Trinity to conceive. It is hard to say what one is talking about when one speaks of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>8</sup> Why has the church had so much difficulty with its doctrine of the Holy Spirit?

Both Welker and Jenson point out that the confusion surrounding the Holy Spirit as a distinct person within the Trinity arises to a large degree from the way in which Western theology has developed. For example, Welker asks the questions:

How can we understand the Holy Spirit as personal if, in accordance with the leading contemporary doctrinal traditions, the Spirit is regarded as the bond of peace or the bond of love between the Father and the Son? How can we understand the Spirit as personal if we regard the Spirit, still more abstractly, as relation-relation between the other two persons of the Trinity and, likewise, between God and humans?<sup>9</sup>

In other words, Western theology seems to be inadequate in establishing the Holy Spirit as more than a bond that exists between the other trinitarian identities. Robert Jenson, when critiquing Barth's lopsided presentation of the Holy Spirit in terms of being merely 'the perfect consubstantial fellowship between the Father and the Son,'<sup>10</sup> attributes this lopsided thinking to 'Barth's unquestioning devotion to the West's standard teaching that the Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son.'<sup>11</sup> Jenson is *not* saying that this is not the function of the Holy Spirit, nor that Barth's description is in itself wrong, but rather that no other description of the Holy Spirit appears. If all that the Spirit is is the 'bond of love' between Father and Son, then, argues Jenson, he has not been adequately and properly established theologically as a distinct person.

Jenson begins his 'solution' to what he calls 'the pneumatological problem' by noting that:

Barth's exemplary use of Western doctrine thus displays what can only be called an 'I-Thou' trinitarianism. The Father and the Son are unproblematically understood as persons in mutual converse, whose mutuality constitutes the triune life and is the ground of God's *ad*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Jenson, p. 155.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

*extra.* But the Spirit is not a *party* to this converse. And, indeed, it is at the heart of the 'I-Thou relationship,' as it has been normative in Western thinking, to allow no third party.<sup>12</sup>

Jenson questions whether an 'I-Thou' relationship, as described in traditional terms, can be healthy, and in fact describes such a relationship as enslaving. He begins his argument by writing that 'if you and I are to be free for one another, each of us must be both subject and object in our converse.'<sup>13</sup> If I am not object for you as subject just as you are object for me as subject, then 'I enslave you, no matter with what otherwise good disposition I intend for you.'<sup>14</sup> How can this enslaving be avoided? How can two persons be mutually available in love for each other? Jenson's answer is: 'Surely we must acknowledge that if there is to be freely given love there must be a third party in the meeting of 'I' and 'Thou.' If you and I are to be free for one another, someone must be our liberator.'<sup>15</sup> Jenson argues, for example, that if a friendship becomes too exclusive, allowing no third party, then it becomes destructive. And so, argues Jenson, 'we must learn to think: the Spirit is indeed love between two personal lovers, (Father and Son), but he can be this just *in that* he is antecedently himself. He is another who in his own intention liberates the Father and Son to love each other.'<sup>16</sup>

Jenson's argument has the advantage of offering some explanation as to why the Godhead is a triunity, and not a biunity. It also has the strength of avoiding any faulty subordinationist theology, wherein the Holy Spirit is perceived as something other than fully divine. Only God can 'liberate' God to love. It is strange, however, that Jenson does not offer any Scriptural support for his argument, but relies on his understanding of human 'I-Thou' relationships. Jenson is always quite adamant that any knowledge or revelation that we have of God must be searched for in the narrative events of the Scriptures. This point is central to Jenson's theology. He is opposed to any sort of natural theology or theory that would suggest that we would know anything about God from any source other than the events recorded in Scripture. In this instance of attempting to understand the

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 156.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 156.

personhood of the Holy Spirit, however, Jenson seems to break his own rule by employing natural theology to establish his case.

Let us see how, in more detail, Jenson breaks his own rule. His argument arises from basing his understanding of Trinitarian pneumatology upon the inadequacy of the 'I-Thou' relational model developed by Martin Buber, but particularly as perceived by Hegel. Jenson seems to extrapolate his argument that the 'I' and the 'Thou' of human 'I-Thou' relationships need a third party to free them to relate healthily, to the Father and the Son. And it is the Holy Spirit who fulfils this function as the third party. Jenson's argument may well be true, but where is this reality about the Trinity made explicit in the Scriptures? Jenson appears to be imposing human developed theories about how humans relate healthily upon the Trinity, and in doing so seems to violate his won theological principles with regard to revelation.

Welker comes at the issue of the Holy Spirit's personhood from a different angle. Welker's 'solution' to the question about the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit as person depends upon what he calls 'the concept of *resonance*.'<sup>17</sup> We recall from above discussion that Welker states that it is not the fact of being a center of action that necessarily establishes a being or an identity as a person. Welker states that 'only through a domain of resonance does a center of action become a person.'<sup>18</sup> A being only becomes a person 'by being formed in multiple webs of relationships'<sup>19</sup> with other beings.

The central statement in Welker's argument is that 'The Holy Spirit is to be understood as the multiform unity of perspectives on Jesus Christ, a unity in which we participate and which we help to constitute.'<sup>20</sup> Welker uses metaphors to explain this statement. Each of us, whilst certainly centers of action and self-consciousness, becomes a whole person publicly within the context of being a child of our parents, a friend of our friends, or a contemporary of our contemporaries, and within all other webs of our relationships that we belong to. The total unity of those external perspectives in which we exist constitutes our 'public' person, and or 'domain of resonance.' Similarly, the Holy Spirit is Christ's domain of resonance, he is 'the

<sup>17</sup> Welker, 'The Holy Spirit,' p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

public person who corresponds to the individual of Jesus Christ.<sup>21</sup> For the Holy Spirit is at work in the world today, working in and through everyday life, pointing humanity to Christ. And it is we, who are God's witnesses in Christ's power in the world, who have the privilege of participating in the Spirit's work.

Welker's perspective on the Holy Spirit is fascinating. It must be noted, however, that the personhood of the Holy Spirit, as defined by Welker, seems to depend largely on the redemptive work of Christ. We might ask how, in Welker's system, the Holy Spirit might be a person had the redemption not taken place. Of course, such questions may be futile, because we do not have any specific revelation about how the Trinity would have been identifiable apart from the redemption and God's revealing of himself in the redemptive events of history. We must be careful about being too specific about what God's identity would have been like had he not created at all, or if he had chosen to create in a way different from the way in which he actually did choose.

We may criticise Welker's view on one other ground, and that is that it does not appear to be a solid trinitarian perspective, with the Father being noticeable by his absence. Does not the Father as origin of the Trinity have some bearing of the personhood of the Holy Spirit and his pointing us to Christ? Is not the Father included with the Spirit in some way as being a part of the domain of resonance of Christ? And if so, how? To be fair to Welker, we note that his other theological works are clearly trinitarian. However, in this instance, his work does seem to deficient in trinitarian perspective.

Currently, I know of no fully plausible theological explanation that establishes how and why the Holy Spirit is a third distinct person of the Trinity. It is an area, perhaps, which needs more attention. In the concluding section we turn our attention to consider a few final issues that have bearing upon our understanding of the Holy Spirit as a person within the Trinity.

#### IV. A Final Few Observations

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

One of the important doctrines of the church is that of the procession of the Holy Spirit. The actual meaning of this doctrine has not always been totally clear. For example, the question of how 'being begotten' is different from 'proceeding' needs to be explained, although this paper is not the place for such a discussion. Nor is the question of whom it is that the Holy Spirit proceeds from unanimously agreed upon. Does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father only, or is it also from the Son? And how can we avoid any sort of subordinationist fallacy or heresy in our theology as we approach the question of procession? That is, how do we do due honour to the divine equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son as we examine questions such as procession?

The matter of procession leads inevitably to the *filioque* question, which divided and still divides East and West. Initially the Augustinian idea of *filioque* and then its insertion as a creedal clause by the West was considered necessary to ensure recognition of divine equality of the Son with the Father. The focus was therefore not so much on the Spirit as on the Son. But one of the perhaps unforeseen consequences of the *filioque* insertion has been the 'neglect' of the Holy Spirit as being equal with the Father and the Son. It has also led to many thinking, speaking, or writing almost exclusively of the Holy Spirit's trinitarian fellowship in terms of being a relation of origin. Pannenberg notes the problem in the following way: 'The mistaken formulation of Augustine points in fact to a defect which plagues the Trinitarian theological language,.....namely, that of seeing the relations among the Father, Son, and Spirit exclusively as relations of origin.'<sup>22</sup> Pannenberg's point is that we need to develop accurate theological ideas that encompass the reciprocity of the members of the Trinity, as well as their relations of origin. This would then help to clarify the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

Clearly this is not the place to develop Pannenberg's ideas in great detail. However, we may note one of Pannenberg's essential ideas. He refers to the Holy Spirit as breathed by the Father. But he says: 'The Spirit also fills the Son and glorifies him in obedience to the Father, thereby glorifying the Father himself. In doing so he leads into all truth (John 16:13) and searches out the deep things of the Godhead (1

<sup>22</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Vol 1* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1988) p. 317.

Cor 2:10-11).<sup>23</sup> We ought not to try to read too much into what Pannenberg is saying here. But we may perhaps interpret his words by paraphrasing them in the following way: whilst the Holy Spirit derives being from the Father, and is sent by both the Father and the Son, he gives the Son glory, and in doing so also gives proper and due glory to the Father, who is known only when the Son is known. The Holy Spirit takes the glory that is the Father's and shines that glory back perfectly onto the Father though the Son. And only God can give proper, due and perfect glory to God.

### Conclusion

In summary we may observe that, whilst the divine personhood of the Holy Spirit is clearly revealed in Scripture, a number of theologians have stated that theology has had a difficult task in effectively encompassing that divine personhood in its description of God's identity. In particular there have often been descriptions of the Trinity that fail to account for the reciprocity of the three divine persons and thereby present the Holy Spirit in a subordinationist role, or even as a capacity of Christ rather than as a distinct person. There have been various attempts at establishing the Holy Spirit successfully as a distinct person in a theological sense, though I am not sure that any have been entirely convincing. Perhaps Pannenberg comes the closest. It is without doubt, however, that the Scriptures are clear about the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit. And perhaps this is sufficient.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 320.

## **BOOK REVIEW: MICHAEL PARSONS, LUTHER AND CALVIN ON OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES<sup>1</sup>**

*Jon Case, Glen O'Brien, Judy Rigby*

Michael Parsons is Head of the Department of Christian Thought at the Baptist Theological College in Perth, WA, has taught theology at Murdoch University, and is a past contributor to Aldersgate Papers.<sup>2</sup> His stated concern in this volume is to 'examine and to explore the narrative exegesis of the Reformers...to elucidate *their* understanding of the narrative text as it is conveyed in their exposition.'<sup>3</sup> He admits that neither Luther nor Calvin can rightly be referred to as 'narrative theologians' in the current sense of the term. However, like all of us, they had to deal with the narrative passages of scripture, and the way they did so is helpful and instructive in terms of modeling an interpretive approach.

The approach taken in this volume may be compared to that taken by David C. Steinmetz who, in *Luther in Context*<sup>4</sup> and *Calvin in Context*,<sup>5</sup> examines the Reformers' treatment of given passages of Scripture set against the backdrop of the long and honoured exegetical tradition of the church, as well as the discussion of their contemporaries on the same passages, giving due consideration to their 'theological antecedents and contemporaries.'<sup>6</sup> Such study reminds us that the magisterial Reformers did not simply open their Bibles and read them, coming up with novel ideas fresh out of the blue sky. They

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Parsons, *Luther and Calvin On Old Testament Narratives: Reformation Thought and Narrative Text*. Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; and Lampeter, Ceredigion: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Parsons, 'Passion and the Nature of God: Theology and a Biblical Text,' *Aldersgate Papers*, vol. 3 (2002), 27-49.

<sup>3</sup> Parsons, *Luther and Calvin*, v.

<sup>4</sup> David C. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> David C. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, x.

understood themselves to be part of an interpretive community, and to be entering into a centuries-long conversation about the church's book. According to Steinmetz, 'the best and most productive way to study Calvin is to place him in the context of the theological and exegetical traditions that formed him and in the lively company of the friends and enemies from whom he learned and with whom he quarreled.'<sup>7</sup>

Parsons does little of this contextualizing, choosing instead to indicate the ways in which the Reformers handled scripture in light of certain principles we now refer to under the term 'narrative theology.' He limits himself for the most part to the lectures and commentaries, with occasional reference to sermonic material. It would be unfair to criticize Parsons for failing to do what was never his stated purpose, but one is left with the sense that some greater degree of contextualization of each discussion would have shed more light. Did the way in which Luther and Calvin handled narrative passages differ in any way from patristic exegesis, for example,<sup>8</sup> or from Anabaptists such as Balthasar Hubmaier who took exception to Luther's doctrine of the bondage of the will along Occamist lines.<sup>9</sup>

These days church history tends to be studied as social history and, while this is a perfectly valid discipline, it is good to revisit the Reformation in terms of the history of its ideas – as intellectual history. Steinmetz describes Luther as being 'born to theology as Bach was born to music or Durer to color and light. Theological talk, disputation, and writing were meat and drink for him. It is therefore not possible to capture his full human reality without giving serious attention to his consuming theological vocation.'<sup>10</sup> Parsons cites Peter Matheson's view that the Reformation involved not so much a doctrinal shift or a structural reorganization as a shift in 'the root metaphors of the age.'<sup>11</sup> Yet surely these 'root metaphors' were forged

<sup>7</sup> Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context*, 209. Steinmetz gives fine examples of this approach throughout both of his *In Context* books, and is particularly good at demonstrating Luther and Calvin's dialogue with the Thomists and anti-Thomists. *Luther in Context*, 47-58; *Calvin in Context*, 141-56.

<sup>8</sup> David C. Steinmetz, 'Calvin and Patristic Exegesis,' in Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context*, 122-37.

<sup>9</sup> David C. Steinmetz, 'Luther and Hubmaier on the Freedom of the Human Will,' in Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, 59-71.

<sup>10</sup> Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, x.

<sup>11</sup> P. Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 2000), 119.

partly in the heat both of doctrinal disputation and the reorganization of the church.

In chapter seven Parsons seeks to demonstrate how Luther's apocalypticism and his self-understanding within that worldview was shaped through his reading of the Noachic narrative. In broaching the subject of Luther's apocalypticism, Parsons aligns himself - over against Bernard Lohse - with Heiko Obermann, John Tonkin and James Nestingen in emphasising the signal importance of apocalypticism throughout the development of Luther's thinking. It was both a 'crucial part of the impulse' of his theology and a 'vital element in its goal.'<sup>12</sup>

How precisely did Luther appropriate the Noachic narrative in such a way as to shape the understanding of his world teetering on the apocalyptic brink? First, by drawing a parallel between his own time and Noah's. So Luther observed in both times a certain 'smugness,' 'disregard of the Word,' 'ungodly forms of worship' and so on. These telltale signs of the end were enshrined in the Catholic church of his day, of course, behind which he believed the hand of the devil was working. Secondly, Luther drew a parallel between the figure of Noah and his own role within the struggle of the reformation. The figure of Noah provided a 'new criterion' for Luther's self-evaluation. Like Noah, Luther came to understand himself as one who suffered on account of the faith, was harassed and thought foolish, and enjoyed little success in his ministry – all despite his divine commissioning. Finally, Luther discerned an apocalyptic 'pattern' in the flood narrative, a pattern of stages that he related to his own time: 1) God is patient with the world, overlooking humanity's sin; 2) as the world continues to disregard God's word, however, God responds in wrath, and ultimately pours out 3) the salvation and destruction of the Last Day. Luther located himself in the second stage, in which the ministry of the Word was an 'almost unbearable' burden, standing as he did (as the prophets of old), as a 'wall' against the wrath of God.<sup>13</sup> But for the world his concern was even greater, for 'what will happen when we are dead?'<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Parsons, 127.

<sup>13</sup> Parsons, 139.

<sup>14</sup> Parsons, 140.

Given the present theological obsession with narrative, Parsons can hardly help but make the observation in his work that Luther and Calvin share some similar concerns: they enter the stories they expound, they seem to assume a 'grand narrative' extending from the Old Testament through the New Testament up to the present, and so on. Luther's handling of the Noahic narrative exemplifies a few of these interpretive moves. Overall, however, the Reformers' engagement with narrative can be seen to diverge from contemporary ('postmodern') reflection on narrative, Parson says, insofar as Luther and Calvin are interested in allowing narrative to ultimately 'point beyond itself to theology and further to experience of God.'<sup>15</sup> 'What matters is that believers are pointed beyond the narrative *per se* to their own encounter with the living and faithful God, through the Word by the Holy Spirit.'<sup>16</sup>

All of this is true, and it is stated clearly and with genuine pastoral concern, but it must be said that Parsons has set up a rather awkward comparison between the Reformers' and postmoderns' interests in narrative. Cardinal assumptions - with respect to God, history and human identity - motoring these interests in the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries are in some respects hardly commensurate. Further, it seems to me that Parsons' own understanding of what narrative can or cannot do is in need of nuance. With respect to his observation that the Reformers were concerned to let narrative 'point beyond itself,' many 'narrative theologians' (the appellation is so worn as to be almost useless anymore) would happily agree that narrative has a 'centrifugal' as well as a 'centripetal' force.

In the fifth chapter of the book, Parsons turns to discussions of gender. In his treatment of the rape passages in Genesis 34 and 2 Samuel 13, he poses a question asked by Marie Fortune, 'why is the church so quick to name sexuality a sin and so hesitant to name the sin of violence against women?'<sup>17</sup> Implicit in this question he asserts, is an accusation that the church is not only culpable today, but also historically culpable, which provides the stimulus for the chapter.

<sup>15</sup> Parsons, 230.

<sup>16</sup> Parsons, 231.

<sup>17</sup> Marie M. Fortune, 'The Way Things are is Not the Way they Have to Be,' in J. B. Nelson and S. P. Longfellow, eds. *Sexuality and the Sacred* (London: Mowbray, 1994), 326-34.

Allowing that the question is too large to adequately deal with in one essay, Parsons narrows his focus to the thinking of Luther and Calvin in their exposition of two particular rape stories in the Old Testament. He proposes to explore what the Reformers do when confronted with the rape narratives: Do they face the questions raised? Do they name the crime? And if they don't, what gets in their way and why?

Parsons investigates these questions by careful study of the writings of the Reformers in their commentaries and sermons noting that the body of writing is larger in the case of Dinah. He compares and contrasts the writings of each of the Reformers in respect to the stories, treating them separately at first, and then making collective observations. He takes care to name these observations as reflections, rather than presuming to draw conclusions.

Throughout the chapter, one discerns that the author perhaps finds himself disappointed in the Reformers. He expresses himself variously as surprised, disconcerted and disturbed at some of their comments. Use of italics and exclamation marks reinforce this impression. Indeed at one point he is forced to remark that Calvin's exposition of the Tamar story is not only surprising but has an 'unfortunate result.'

In this highly readable essay, clearly reasoned, Parsons is forced to conclude (although perhaps somewhat reluctantly) that Calvin and Luther *did* find it difficult to name 'the sin against women.' Suggesting several answers as to why this is so, it probably will not go far enough for some readers, as Parsons refuses to accuse Calvin and Luther of 'overt misogyny.' On the other hand, he does not really excuse them, seeking rather to explain their positions. Perhaps he is right in concluding, 'We begin by understanding the mistakes of the past.'

In offering summary conclusions, Parsons notes that the Reformers often entered into (or were absorbed by) the narrative passages they expounded, and that they understood God to be experienced in the same way in the present as in the biblical text.<sup>18</sup> However, when dealing with passages that seem to contradict certain existing theological propositions, such as the divine impassibility and

<sup>18</sup> Parsons, 228-9.

immutability, Luther and Calvin at times allow these *apriori* beliefs to take precedence over the plain reading of the text.

In making the text subservient to the lived experience of Christians, it is not to be forgotten that the narrative is always about God and God's relationship to a people. Its purpose is to 'facilitate experiential engagement between the reader and the living God.'<sup>19</sup> While Luther and Calvin accept the classical Christian view of God as immutable and impassible they also insist that God is no passive onlooker, but always God-in-relation, God who confronts, God who wrestles with us, startles, frightens, and dislodges us. God can be as much enemy as friend to the believer. To Calvin, God 'pursues Jonah to the fish's belly...punishes Jacob and David by the rape of their daughters' and judges David over his adultery with Bathsheba. In all of this, however, the Reformers want to exonerate and defend God as, in the final analysis, loving and paternal, and therefore, able to be trusted.<sup>20</sup>

For both Reformers, and perhaps especially for Luther, the believer's life is one of temptation, with the promise of triumphing over all trials through God's grace. The believer's weakness is simply cause for depending upon God's strength.<sup>21</sup> Parsons is right in reminding us that these Reformers were essentially pastoral in their theological orientation and motivation. 'They read and expound narrative in order to give pastoral warning, help, comfort, and encouragement.'<sup>22</sup> This is a fact often forgotten in the case of Calvin, who is popularly supposed to have been some kind of cold fish intellectual with a perverse delight in contemplating the damned as objects of God's predestinating reprobation. Nothing could be further from the truth, not only in the case of Calvin's commentaries, which often exude a warm pastoral intent, but also in the case of the *Institutes*. It is not predestination, or election, or the divine decrees, that forms the centrepiece of that work but the believer's mystical union with Christ. His discussion of election and predestination is couched in the much wider consideration of 'the way in which we receive the grace of Christ; what benefits come to us from it, and what effects follow.'<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Parsons, 232.

<sup>20</sup> Parsons, 233-34.

<sup>21</sup> Parsons, 234-35.

<sup>22</sup> Parsons, 236.

<sup>23</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill and Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 537-986.

*Luther and Calvin on Narrative Texts* makes a good contribution to our understanding of the Reformers and their handling of biblical texts. It sets out to draw comparisons between today's 'narrative' approaches while conceding that, properly speaking the Reformers were not 'narrative theologians.' Parsons' comparison between pre-modern sixteenth century perspectives and today's narrative theology needs nuancing. However, his work gives us a valuable reminder of the essentially pastoral orientation of these Reformers and their concern to help the believer make sense of life under the gracious rule of a covenant God.