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**“A BEAUTIFUL VIRGIN COUNTRY READY
FOR A REVIVAL OF BIBLE HOLINESS”:
EARLY HOLINESS EVANGELISTS
IN AUSTRALIA**

by

Glen O’Brien

It is a long way from God’s Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio, to the twisted gums and red tile roofs of Australia. When E. E. Shellhamer made the journey in 1936, he reported that he had found “a sincere and hungry set of people. Already I have more calls than I can fill. O, that some of our holiness evangelists would come this way, instead of huddling together and trying to create a blaze on burnt-over territory. This is a beautiful virgin country ready for a revival of Bible Holiness.”¹

As things turned out, Australia was not quite ready to be ravished. The first representatives of the North American holiness movement would not be warmly received. In the first half of the twentieth century, visiting holiness evangelists from North America often were looked upon by other evangelicals as “holy rollers” and “sinless perfectionists,” purveyors of a brand of religion thought to be populist, coarse, and theologically suspect. The doctrine of “entire sanctification,” understood as a second work of grace to be received in a special “baptism” of “perfect love,” was viewed as theologically heterodox and destructive to the peace of the church.

¹Kingsley M. Ridgway, *In Search of God: An Account of Ministerial Labours in Australia and the Islands of the Sea* (Brockville, Ontario: Standard Publishing House, n.d., c.1937), 122.

expression of American holiness movement teaching, the terminology was adapted to Reformed convictions, although its spirituality and ethos were very similar to the holiness movement in North America. Instead of the “eradication” and “destruction” of sin, Keswickians preferred to speak of its “counteraction” and “suppression.” The leading Keswick teacher, Robert Pearsall Smith, was an American visitor to Keswick whose teaching bordered on antinomianism, as he seemed to teach a victory over all sin as a result of the Holy Spirit’s infilling. He was caught in an immoral act with a young woman during the conference at Brighton, England, in May, 1875, after which he fell out of favor with the Keswick crowd.

As Keswick developed in England, and later also in Australia, the American emphasis on sin’s eradication was further toned down. B. B. Warfield’s influential critique of Wesleyan perfectionism was based on the erroneous assumption that Pearsall Smith’s teachings were a sample of Wesleyan perfectionism.⁵ However, such typically Wesleyan teachings as the profound depth of human inability, necessitating an absolute dependence on God’s grace, and the need for practicing rigorous self denial, while availing oneself of all of the appointed means of grace, were conspicuously absent from Pearsall Smith’s “higher life” teaching.

In 1869 the prominent Baptist minister, Silas Mead, influenced by Pearsall Smith, was leading a holiness movement in Adelaide, South Australia.⁶ A holiness rally was held in Melbourne in January, 1875, under the leadership of Hussey Burgh Macartney of St. Mary’s Church of England in Caulfield, a Keswick advocate who had traveled to England to speak at the convention in 1878.⁷ The paper he established in 1873, *The Missionary at Home and Abroad*, had a holiness emphasis. Methodists held holiness conventions in the 1880s and formed a Methodist Holiness Association in the middle part of that decade.⁸ Methodists in New South Wales

⁵Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. *Studies in Perfectionism* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1958), 247-311.

⁶*Truth and Progress* (Aug. 1874), 90-91; *Spectator* (16 Oct., 1875), 280, cited in Hugh Jackson, *Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand 1860-1930* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 63.

⁷*Southern Cross* (30 Jan., 1875), 1; *The Missionary at Home and Abroad* (Sept. 1878), 134-135, cited in Jackson, 63.

⁸Walter Phillips, *Defending “A Christian Country”: Churchmen and Society in NSW in the 1880s and After* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1981), 80-81.

within Australian Methodism. How did Australian Methodists of the 1920s understand the doctrine of holiness and what was the style of holiness preaching with which they were familiar? This was the period which saw Kingsley Ridgway, who would go on to be the founder of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia in 1945, leave his theological training at Queen's College and the Methodist Church to link with the Canadian Holiness evangelist A. B. Carson.¹⁵ Ridgway's autobiography recounts his own version of the bemused response to holiness religion on the part of Methodists.¹⁶

A. The 1928 Norman Dunning Campaign. Norman Dunning's campaign opened in Perth on March 11th, 1928. It serves as a sample case of the type of "holiness evangelism" with which Australian Methodists of the 1920s felt comfortable. Dunning came from England with the warm recommendation of holiness preacher Samuel Chadwick of Cliff College. "He preaches," said Chadwick, "the Old Gospel of the grace in Christ . . . which saves to the uttermost all them that come to God by Him. Above all, it is manifest that the power is not of Norman G. Dunning, but of God."¹⁷ A glowing telegram from the Home Mission Secretary of Western Australia reported, "Dunning Captured Conference. Crusade Commenced Yesterday. One Hundred Decisions."¹⁸ The idea of referring to such an event as a "crusade" was apparently a novelty. A letter from the Rev. Eric Nye, secretary of Dunning's Western Australian campaign, gives the interesting aside, "By the way, he likes his mission to be called a 'Crusade'; he uses the word constantly."¹⁹

It is clear that the Australian Methodists of the period favored rational sobriety over emotional excitement. One gets the feeling of a sigh of relief from the Rev. Eric Nye's report of the Perth crusade, the inaugural event of the whole campaign.

¹⁵ Glen O'Brien, "Old Time Methodists in a New World: Kingsley Ridgway and A. B. Carson," *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review*, Special Issue, "His Dominions: Explorations in Canadian-Australian Religious and Cultural Identity," no. 29 (June 2001), 63-83; O'Brien, *Pioneer with a Passion*, 15-39.

¹⁶ Ridgway, *In Search of God*, 48-49.

¹⁷ *The Spectator and Methodist Chronicle*, vol. LIV, no. 9 (29 February, 1928), 207.

¹⁸ Sent to the Rev. A. T. Holden, *Spectator*, vol. LIV, no. 11 (14 March, 1928), 253.

¹⁹ *Spectator*, vol. LIV, no. 12 (21 March, 1928), 287.

Methodist Hymn Book, followed by the *Crusader Hymnal* and the *Abridged Hymn Sheet*, and in that order. H. G. Secomb reported approvingly on the Bendigo Crusade, "We have used the Hymn Book at all services and meetings conducted by Mr. Dunning."²⁵

Referring to earlier evangelists such as Torrey, Alexander, Chapman, and Gipsy Smith, Rev. R. B. McConchie saw Dunning as "cast in a different mold." He "resorts to no artifices or devices in order to secure an unfair advantage" and "he resorts to no pulpit pyrotechnics or thunderous roar to compel a verdict. . . . He is a splendid example of the truth of the utterance that it is not necessary to shout and roar in order to be heard in the largest building."²⁶ It is clear that Australian Methodists of the period favored a type of evangelistic effort which was clear and rational, rather than emotionally persuasive. This contrasted to some extent with North American varieties of revivalism, given to more emotional expression.

B. Methodist Holiness Conventions. The most significant forum for the preaching of a distinctive holiness message in the Australian Methodism of the 1920s was the "Holiness Convention" designed specifically for that purpose and held annually by the Methodist Local Preachers' Association. The 1928 Convention was held at the Brunswick Street Methodist Mission in Fitzroy. Some fourteen hundred people sat down to the free meal provided at the Fitzroy Town Hall. "Our convention stands for holiness," read the report on the proceedings. "Because God commands us to be holy, and sanctification means instantaneous deliverance from depravity (see John Wesley), our Convention messages are vibrant with such teachings."²⁷

There was no "gradualism" being set forth. "Boys and girls, young men and young women experienced the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and received a perfect pardon written in blood. We are praying that they may go on to perfection. . . . We thank God for the precious outpouring of the Holy Spirit. To many it was pentecostal."²⁸ On the first

²⁵H. G. Secomb, "The Norman Dunning Crusade: The Bendigo Crusade," *Spectator*, vol. LVI, no.30 (25 July, 1928), 712.

²⁶Rev. R. B. McConchie, "Norman Dunning Crusade in Bendigo: Impressions and Appreciations," *Spectator*, vol. LVI, no.31 (1 August, 1928), 734.

²⁷"Local Preachers Holiness Convention," *Spectator*, vol. LIV, no. 24 (13 June, 1928), 567.

²⁸"Local Preachers Holiness Convention," *Spectator*, 567.

ness churches began to arrive in the early part of the twentieth century, they encountered a Methodist Church still open to the old style revivalism, yet beginning to be somewhat apologetic, or even embarrassed about its revivalist past, and feeling the impact of theological modernism in its academies. However, by the time holiness denominations such as the Church of the Nazarene and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia were officially organized in the mid-1940s, the religious landscape had become significantly different. Holiness-style Christianity had become a marginalized pocket of the evangelical movement.

The Annual Holiness Convention for 1944, then in its 29th year, was held at South Richmond Methodist Church. Run, as were those throughout the 1920s and 30s, by the Methodist Local Preachers Association, it was advertised as a time for “withdrawal from the incessant strain of modern life, and for heart searching and prayer in a congenial environment.” A. C. Chesson of the Sydney Free Evangelical Fellowship (later a Nazarene pastor) was one of the speakers. The lead article in the *Spectator* for 22 July, 1944, speaks of “the essential need of holiness,” as one of the “notes” of Methodism. However, holiness is defined rather vaguely as “a man’s faith issuing in good works and pure life” and as involving a “moral” and “disciplined” life.³³ No second blessing holiness here!

In a commentary on Charles Wesley’s hymn *All Things Are Possible*, the term “Christian progress” is suggested as a replacement for “Christian perfection.” Using a series of rhetorical questions the author suggests that the doctrine of holiness is not very often sung about, spoken about, or taught, and that the older language connected with it is “outworn . . . not understood and not appreciated.”³⁴ A correspondent sets out to “clarify the distinction between justification and entire sanctification” by means of early Methodist testimonies to the experience.³⁵ It is notable that, while these historic examples were given, there were no current testimonies, such as would be found in *The Australian Nazarene*, *The Australian Wesleyan* or *The Wesleyan Messenger* from the same period.

In the 20 years between Kingsley Ridgway’s departure from the Methodist Church and his formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church,

³³“The Methodist Witness,” *Spectator*, vol. LXX, no. 30 (26 July, 1944), front page.

³⁴AHW, “Hymns for Congregational Worship: All Things are Possible MHB 548,” *Spectator*, vol. LXXI, no. 4 (24 January, 1945), 53.

³⁵Brother Dan’l, “Christian Perfection: The Word of Testimony,” *Spectator*, vol. LXXI, no. 47 (21 November, 1945), 751.

Shakespeare.”³⁹ The Wesleyan class meeting was at the core of his spirituality. He first joined a Methodist class meeting when he was converted at the age of 11, and he never gave up the practice of meeting together with like-minded believers for mutual encouragement and accountability. Upon coming to Australia from England, however, he found the practice of the class meeting to be in a state of decline.

The term “evangelical liberal” may sound like an oxymoron. In the early 1920s, however, many were appropriating the findings of the higher criticism, without jettisoning their evangelical convictions. They thought it possible to accept the canons of biblical criticism while preserving a passion for soul winning. A. E. Albiston was appointed principal of the Theological Hall and professor of theology in 1920. He had graduated with honors in natural sciences in 1888, the year that Queen’s College opened. His appointment as principal of the Theological Hall came after serving 27 years in active circuit ministry, and in 1919 as President of the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference. A description of him as “a liberal Protestant, a humanist, and an evangelical,” reflects his closeness to the spirit of Sugden.⁴⁰

Some considered the liberal humanism of Queen’s College to be a threat to the evangelical vitality of Methodism. Certain delegates at the Conference of 1898 launched an attack on Sugden’s “latitudinarianism.” His students quickly rose to his defense, but after the Conference “a concerned Methodist” from Fitzroy wrote to the President of the Council, William Quick, that “some of the young men that go in there [Queen’s] are full of love and zeal for the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom, but when they leave they have lost all ardour and become mere talking machines. . . .”⁴¹

Sugden was often attacked for holding to the “higher criticism” of the Bible, and for his liberal views on social questions, such as dancing on church property, which Methodist law forbade. But in 1923 Sugden had gained enough respect to be elected President of the General Confer-

³⁹ Parnaby, 32. Sugden was a collector of early editions of Wesley’s *Works* and he donated his collection to the College. When to this was added by W. H. Fitchett, T. E. Brigden’s early collection, the Queen’s collection became “one of the four best collections in the world.” Parnaby, 102.

⁴⁰ Minutes, Queen’s College Council (15 June, 1900), in Parnaby, 147.

⁴¹ Letter to W. A. Quick (8 April 1898), from 56 Rose St., Fitzroy, signature illegible, *The Sugden Papers*, cited in Parnaby, 99.

his *Commentary* on the list of books used for the training of probationers, and this was to become the eye of a storm of controversy. In 1922, W. H. Fitchett, a respected leader in the Methodist Church, published at his own expense a booklet entitled *A Tattered Bible and a Mutilated Christ*. Fitchett, the founder and principal of Methodist Ladies College, had also founded an evangelical paper, *The Southern Cross*, which contained "some of the most judicious writing on controversial issues."⁴⁶ Fitchett moved that the Victorian Conference remove Peake's *Commentary* from use.

Here is a fact only half known and less than half understood: that for the past four years all the probationers in the ministry of this church have been required to study both Christ and the Bible from a book that presents the spectacle of a Bible robbed of its certainty and of quite another Christ than that of the great ages of the great creeds that lie behind us. And if that view of the Bible and of Christ gets into the pulpit and saturates its teaching, gets into the Sunday Schools and is filtered into the minds of its children, gets into the religious experience of its members, that will be for the Methodist Church a disaster, deep, far reaching and enduring, which it will scarcely survive.⁴⁷

In spite of such appeals, Peake's *Commentary* was retained. Ian Beward gives a good summary of the ethos that prevailed in Melbourne at this time.

[L]iberal clergy were . . . influential . . . among a considerable body of Presbyterians and Methodists. . . . Principal Arthur Albiston [at Queen's] and Sir Irving Benson of Wesley Church, Melbourne, were interesting combinations of evangelical heritage and modernizing tendencies. Liberal impact was moderated by the warm-hearted piety which was still dominant. It was possible to sing Wesley's hymns and still appreciate their spiritual power, while being open to the restatement of theological ideas, when there was no confessional heritage enforced to act as a yardstick of orthodoxy.

⁴⁶ Beward, 196.

⁴⁷ Rev. W. F. Betts, *The Drift: Tracing the Drift in Modern Methodism, Leading Up to My Resignation in 1954* (Melbourne: People's Church Publishers, n.d.), 1-3.

experience” when he professes, “I am the product of the quiet routine work of our Methodist Church.” Similarly, Herbert W. R. Malseed is able to say, “My Christian experience is a story of progression through the various departments of our Sunday School and Church.”

There were some, such as W. Russell Maltby, who were concerned at this lack of definiteness in Methodist testimony. In an essay entitled *The Gradual Christian*, Maltby expresses concern at the tendency toward the loss of the note of certainty in Methodist conversions.

We were not wrong in saying that some conversions might be more gradual than others, but we were wrong if we thought they could be arranged to take place unconsciously or automatically. In making conversion less dramatic, we ought not to have made it less divine; in seeing it as more of a process, it should not have been less of a miracle. . . . We never intended to substitute acquiescence in a Christian environment for the personal experience of the power of God, but this is what it has come to, with thousands of church-going people today. And it is a poor exchange, if, instead of the ladder let down from heaven, whose foot was on the earth and top in the skies, you have only an escalator with its foot in the Sunday School and its top in Church membership.⁵²

The doctrine of entire sanctification was still adhered to by at least some Australian Methodists in the 1920s. Edward Sugden was able to include “entire sanctification” as one of “the doctrines emphasized by John Wesley” at a lunch-time address given to ministers entitled *Our Doctrines*.⁵³ On Anzac Sunday 1928, at the Central Mission, the President of the Conference, the Rev. J. H. Cain, preached on *The Blessing of a Clean Heart*. The substance of the sermon, based on Psalm 51,⁵⁴ was published in the *Spectator*. But this emphasis would continue to wane during the first half of the twentieth century, leaving the holiness witness in Australian Methodism significantly muted by the time Wesleyan Methodists and Nazarenes began their work in earnest during the years following World War II.

Alongside a waning interest in holiness teaching, Methodists, along with other Protestants, had lost interest in doctrinal controversy. Revival-

⁵²*Spectator*, vol. LIV, no. 17 (25 April, 1928), 402.

⁵³*Spectator*, vol. LIV, no. 13 (28 March, 1928), 299.

⁵⁴“Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Psalm 51:1.

States. The Wesleyan-Holiness churches represented a possible alternative Methodism, or so they saw themselves, less susceptible to the inroads of modernism, and the authentic heirs of Wesleyan revivalism.

The First Rise of Wesleyan-Holiness Churches in Australia

We will review briefly four examples of the rise in Australia of Wesleyan/Holiness churches. They saw themselves as resisting modernism and carrying the banner of Wesleyan revivalism.

A. Elliot John Rien and Bethshan Holiness Mission. Bethshan Holiness Mission, in Wyee NSW, was founded in 1908 by Elliot John and Ethel Rien and Esther Wood. Rien was born near Lithgow (NSW) on 16 November, 1866, to a railway worker, Martin Rien, and his wife. Brought up in the Presbyterian Church after a move to Windsor (NSW), he followed his father's footsteps in employment before eventually entering the Hawkesbury Agricultural College at Richmond. During his time as a student there, he began to attend both a Methodist class meeting and Salvation Army meetings, eventually joining the Methodist Church. He took charge of a silk farm in the tiny Hunter Valley township of Wyee in 1897, after marrying Ethel Taylor in February of that year. Rien was soon preaching in the district in his spare time, holding cottage meetings and running a Sunday School.

In September, 1907, a visiting American holiness evangelist from Denver, introduced the Riens to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. The Rev. R. L. Wertheim was a woman evangelist of the Methodist Episcopal Church who held a series of meetings at the Wyee Union Church, during which the Riens and Esther Wood "experienced holiness." According to his son, Elliot T. Rien, it was probably the preaching of Wertheim that "laid the foundation" of his father's "remarkable ability in the exegesis of the Bible."⁵⁷

After running an Easter Holiness Convention in 1908, it was decided that a permanent Holiness Mission should be established at Wyee. It is interesting to note that, even though Elliot Rien established the non-denominational Bethshan Holiness Mission in order to promote the message of holiness, he never withdrew from his membership in the Methodist Church, and did not exhibit a sectarian attitude toward the mainstream churches.

⁵⁷Rien, 42.

Philpott reported 6 converts in the *Gospel Trumpet* in April, 1909. The 4 November, 1909, edition listed Philpott's mission as officially recognized by the movement. Early in 1910, the *Gospel Trumpet* published a long piece on Philpott's observations of life in Australia. It was noted that there was a widespread nominal allegiance to Christianity in Australia, but a low degree of personal commitment and little regular church attendance. Reported was a "commonality" between Australians and Americans, citing the warm reception of a group of American missionaries from the Chapman-Alexander Mission in Boston and of crew members on board visiting American warships.⁶¹

The following two years saw little fruit for the labor expended and the Philpotts began to grow disheartened. E. M. and Lillian Beebe arrived in Sydney on Christmas day, 1911, staying for a few days with the Philpotts and then moving to Queensland. The Philpotts did not consider themselves ministers, but lay people trying to be faithful in their witness. They felt their greatest need was for a minister to be sent to them. The call for a minister was answered by E. P. May, who, interestingly, had been born in Australia (in Goulburn, NSW) in 1887. He had emigrated with his parents four years later, first to England, and then to Canada, where he grew up. May was converted in 1905 after moving from Canada to Ansonia, Connecticut. He became a Salvation Army officer, and while stationed in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, came in contact with the Church of God (Anderson). In 1915 he began to work at the Gospel Trumpet Company in Anderson, Indiana, and was also engaged in traveling evangelism. In 1917 he wrote a series of articles on Australia and gave an appeal for missionaries in the issue of 25 January.

On 21 August, 1917, May left Anderson, Indiana, as the Church of God's first accredited missionary to Australia. Along with his wife, he traveled overland, holding meetings along the way, and then sailed from Vancouver, British Columbia, aboard S. S. Niagara for Sydney. On approaching Australia they detoured to Auckland, New Zealand, to elude detection by a German warship patrolling the area. Between Fiji and New Zealand they sailed "blacked out on a zig-zag course and . . . far from the usual shipping lanes."⁶² By January 1918, the Mays were holding three regular weekly meetings in homes around Campsie and preaching in Syd-

⁶¹Hughes, 6-7.

⁶²Hughes, 13.

Letters from the Mays to Anderson, Indiana, became less and less frequent until the 1926 *Yearbook* gave “the last public mention of the work in Australia for twenty six years.”⁶⁶ Hughes suggests that May was experiencing burn out, “the strain of so many years of hard work . . . finally taking its toll.”⁶⁷ His wife had also experienced illness. Carl Swart, who restarted Church of God work in the late 1950s, reports that May had encountered financial difficulties, a fire had destroyed the uninsured printing equipment and supplies and May had had a falling out with American church leaders, all of which conspired together to lead to the abandonment of the work.⁶⁸ May came out of obscurity to preach at a Church of God camp meeting in 1966, after the Swarts had recommenced work in Sydney.⁶⁹ May’s grandson, Peter Breen, who is today a Wesleyan Methodist minister in Brisbane, has recounted the family history of the collapse of May’s faith, his marital infidelities, and his eventual return to the faith before his death in the 1980s.⁷⁰

C. Alfred Benson Carson and the Holiness Movement Church.

Around 1919, the Rev Alfred Benson Carson arrived in Sydney from the Holiness Movement Church in Canada, with his wife and six children. They had come to pioneer a holiness work in Australia. They worshipped with the Salvation Army at Junee, NSW, for a time, and then relocated to Melbourne, first in Brunswick and finally in Coburg, where they began to hold meetings in the Temperance Hall. Carson was born in Carsonby, Ontario, on 28 July, 1877.

Carson was converted in Melfort, Saskatchewan, in 1905 under the preaching of the George Paul and S. Wesley Caswell. He was assisting the two evangelists in the construction of a church building when he grew offended at their implication that he was not truly converted. He was a religious and clean living young man, of whom all thought well, but their questions plagued him until one night, in the building he had helped to construct, he underwent a conversion experience. “The night I was converted,” he remembered, “it seemed to me the bottom must have fallen

⁶⁶Hughes, 22.

⁶⁷Hughes, 22.

⁶⁸Hughes, 22.

⁶⁹Clyde E. Goin, “How Swift the Year,” *Church of God Missions*, vol. 31, no. 3 (November, 1966), 3.

⁷⁰In a phone conversation with the author on 9 February, 2005.

In 1920, the Holiness Movement Church of Canada, to which Carson belonged, had undergone a schism, leading to the formation of the Standard Church of America, under the leadership of Ralph Clifford Horner, who had also originally founded the Holiness Movement Church. Later, in 1959, Kingsley Ridgway would write to the President of the Standard Church in response to what he felt was “a veiled attack upon the Wesleyan Church” when an editorial asserted that the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia had its origins in the Standard Church.⁷⁷

Rev. A. B. Carson, under whom I was converted in 1922, came as a missionary to Australia in 1919 from the Holiness Movement Church, not from the Standard Church as stated. In 1924 he organized a Holiness Movement Church in Australia; but none of its members except my wife and myself have ever been members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. There has never been a Standard Church organized in Australia. When I came from Egypt to Australia in 1940 I did labour to establish a Standard Church; but as I wrote to Rev. J. B. Pring and to Rev. E. H. Thompson, the people here simply would not face up to wearing the distinctive uniform which was required of the members, and I was unable to form a membership. None of these people contacted in that period ever became members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Indeed the Wesleyan Methodist Church has actually broken entirely new ground here, and none of its members (except my own family, of course,) even knew me whilst I represented the Standard Church. It is hardly accurate, therefore, to comment editorially that this holiness work in Australia had its origins in the Standard Church.⁷⁸

Clearly, Ridgway valued highly his relationship with A. B. Carson, and his formative years in the Standard Church, but he wanted to make it clear that none of these constituted the formal beginnings of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia. Interestingly, in 2004, the Standard Church of America merged with the Wesleyan Church in Canada and became part of the latter’s Atlantic District, bringing with it mission fields in Egypt, Mexico, and Ghana.

⁷⁷Kingsley Ridgway to Harold K. Sheets, 31 January, 1959. Indianapolis, Indiana: Wesleyan Archives.

⁷⁸Kingsley Ridgway to “Brother Brown,” 27 January, 1959. Indianapolis, Indiana: Wesleyan Archives.

Church of the Nazarene in Australia as soon as possible, by sending a missionary couple. These people “should be people of good common sense and not the type who would sing jazzy songs, or do sensational or merely the story type of preaching. Otherwise they would not be acceptable. And yet they must not think they should take the formal route or else there would be no use in their going.”⁸⁴

Beales met with leaders of the Methodist Church who seemed to have some interest in the Church of the Nazarene and worshipped in churches of several denominations. Here he found some “holiness sympathizers,” especially in Baptist churches where Shellhamer had held most of his meetings. Australia did not feel at all like a mission field to Beals, except that it was far distant from home. A holiness preacher from the Immanuel Church (a splinter group from the US-based Pilgrim Holiness Church) was preaching in Sydney and Beals saw this as an indication of holiness groups “bidding for the people of Australia.”

When the holiness churches finally did get a foothold in the years following World War II, they believed themselves to be providing an unmet need in the Australian community, the message of holiness as a distinct second blessing. The idea of a “second work of grace” or “baptism of the Holy Spirit” experienced subsequent to conversion was not taught outside of Pentecostalism, and the earlier Keswick movement had lost momentum. The widely-read and quoted Scofield Reference Bible held the view that the age of spiritual gifts and miracles had ceased with the death of the apostles, and so special manifestations and distinct “blessings” of the Holy Spirit were no longer available in the current “dispensation.” Such ideas were very influential in Australian evangelicalism. Early Nazarene leader Alfred Chesson described Scofield’s influence as “the dead hand of fatalistic, pessimistic, no more revival dispensationalism [which] has done untold harm in Australia.” Its views “are almost universally accepted in Australia and they stultify any hope of revival. . . .”⁸⁵

Holiness leaders saw Australian evangelicalism as dominated by Calvinism, with its insistence on the irresistibility of grace and a “once-saved-always-saved” position, so at odds with Wesleyan-Arminian insistence on free will and the possibility of falling from grace. It could be

⁸⁴He then goes on to recommend a couple called “the Teasdales,” Beals, 4.

⁸⁵Alfred Chesson to Ted Hollingsworth, 23 March, 1946, Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Archives.

nominal holiness revival that emerged out of the Methodist Episcopal Church in mid-nineteenth century America. There were holiness conventions, holiness sermons, and holiness articles in the *Spectator*, but nothing like the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness to launch an American-style holiness movement. If the American Holiness Movement churches could have established a strong denominational presence in the 1920s, they may have been able to capitalize on what was left of the Methodist interest in holiness and of the Keswick Convention movement. The fact that they emerged in the 1940s, at a time when such interest had considerably waned, meant a lost opportunity.

Nonetheless, the American holiness churches believed themselves to be functioning in a strategic role. While modernists laughed at them, some evangelical Methodists saw them as recovering the original fire of “primitive” Methodism, even if they were not often ready to break ranks with the older church and join with the newcomers. Australian evangelicals after World War II looked back to the age of revivals as a kind of “golden age.” The doctrinal indifferentism that had emerged in mainstream Methodism left some evangelical Methodists looking for an alternative. It was hoped that the North American holiness churches might provide that alternative. Not yet ready to be ravished, “the beautiful virgin” was at least beginning to be wooed.

Heart of Fire: The Story of Australian Pentecostalism (Adelaide: Luke Publications, 1975), 285-290. The second earliest Australian pentecostal ministry, the Southern Evangelical Mission, was also established by a former Methodist, the home missionary Robert Horne. He had been involved with the Keswick movement and began his own independent work in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield in 1911. Philip J. Hughes, *The Pentecostals in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996), 6; Denis and Gwen Smith, *A River is Flowing: The History of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (St. Agnes: Commonwealth Conference Assemblies of God in Australia, 1987), 23.