



Pastor Jim Teaches

A Brief Comparison between the Assemblies of God and the Church of God, Cleveland, TN

This is written with a slight bias toward the COG but no disrespect is meant toward the AG. I personally believe they are among the finest of Christians denominations today. My bias lies simply in my current situation and availability of information.

A Brief History of the Assemblies of God

I. The Assemblies of God has its *roots in a religious revival* that began in the late 1800's and swept into this century with widespread repetition of biblical spiritual experiences.

- During that time, many Christians in the United States and other parts of the world began to feel a need for more of God's power operating in their lives. Individually and in groups, they began earnestly to pray and to seek to conform their commitments and experiences to what they believed was the **New Testament pattern**.
- In response, the Holy Spirit came on large numbers of them, prompting a joyous, spontaneous worship and an intense desire to spread the gospel. As in the Bible in the Book of Acts, this experience, called the "**baptism in the Holy Spirit,**" was **universally accompanied by speaking in unknown languages**. It was associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost (Acts 2), and participants in the movement were called

"Pentecostals."

II. The **beginning** of the modern Pentecostal revival is generally traced to a prayer meeting at **Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, on January 1, 1901**. While many others had spoken in tongues previously during almost every period of spiritual revival, most researchers agree it was here that recipients of the experience, through study of the Scriptures, came to believe speaking in tongues is the biblical evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- The revival spread rapidly to Missouri and Texas, then to California and elsewhere. A **three-year revival meeting at Azusa Street Mission** in Los Angeles attracted believers from across the nation and overseas and served as a springboard to send the Pentecostal message around the world.
- Reports of what was taking place were carried in scores of periodicals and other publications that sprang up with the movement. Spontaneous revivals also began to break out about that time in other parts of the world and on various mission fields.

III. The Pentecostal aspects of the revival were **not generally welcomed by the established churches** and participants in the movement soon found themselves outside existing religious bodies. They were forced to seek their own places of worship, and soon there were **hundreds of distinctly Pentecostal congregations**.

- By 1914, many ministers and laymen alike had begun to realize the rapid spread of the revival, and the many evangelistic outreaches it spawned had created a number of practical problems. The **need arose for formal recognition of ministers** as well as approval and support of missionaries, with full accounting of funds.
- These concerned leaders realized that to protect and preserve the results of the revival the thousands of newly Spirit-baptized believers **should be united in a cooperative fellowship**. In **1914** about 300 preachers and laymen gathered from 20 states and several foreign countries for a "general council" in **Hot Springs, Arkansas**, to discuss and take action on the growing need.
- An important aspect that separated the Assemblies of God from most other Pentecostal congregations was that of their acceptance of the doctrine of the **finished work**; that

sanctification occurred in the Christian at the time of salvation and was not, in fact, a separate work of grace. Hence, the Assemblies of God focused on **two works of grace**: salvation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (whereas many Pentecostal groups believe in three works of grace: salvation, sanctification, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.)

- Their current teaching regarding sanctification is that sanctification is **positionally wrought** at one's salvation and it is **practically worked out** through one's Christian walk.
- The five reasons they listed for calling the meeting were: **doctrinal unity, conservation of the work, foreign missions** interests, **chartering churches** under a common name for legal purposes, and the need for a **Bible training school**.
- A **cooperative fellowship** emerged from the meeting and was incorporated under the name "**The General Council of the Assemblies of God**." Most of the delegates had **little desire to form a new denomination** or sect, and they **structured their organization to unite** the assemblies in ministry and legal identity **while leaving each congregation self-governing and self-supporting**. This structure continues to the present.

IV. In 1916, the General Council added a **Statement of Fundamental Truths** to its constitution. A simple statement, it remains virtually unchanged and continues to provide a sound basis for the Fellowship, giving a firm position on vital doctrines.

V. From the beginning, Assemblies of God ministries **have focused on evangelism and missions** and have resulted in a continuing growth at home and abroad. Our constituency has climbed from the founding convention attendance of 300 to more than 2.5 million in the United States and over 35 million overseas.

VI. Today, Assemblies of God people worship in over **12,000 churches in the U.S. and in 210,435 churches and outstations in 186 other nations**. The aggressive missions programs of the church are designed to establish self-supporting and self-propagating national church bodies in every country. **Ministers and leaders are trained in 1,845 foreign Bible schools — more than any other U.S. based denomination. The Assemblies of God has 20 endorsed Bible colleges, liberal arts colleges, and a seminary in the U.S.**

VII. The national headquarters of the Assemblies of God is located in **Springfield, Missouri**. The headquarters includes an administration building, the Gospel Publishing House, and the International Distribution Center. The Gospel Publishing House is the printing arm of the church turning out more than 14 tons of gospel literature each day

Church of God, Cleveland, TN

Brief History of the Church of God

I. In 1886, in a crude meeting house on the Tennessee-North Carolina border, where the Church of God traces its roots.

- There, a group of eight sincere Christians had a deep desire for a closer relationship and life with Christ.
 - Realizing the futility of reforming their own churches, they established a new church whose objective would be to restore sound scriptural doctrines of the Bible, encourage deeper consecration and promote evangelism and Christian service.
 - Twenty-one years after the formation of the Christian Union that evening at the Barney Creek Meeting House, the growing movement would establish themselves permanently as the Church of God.
- Their common bonds were:
 - Faith in Christ
 - Search for a deeper walk with Christ
 - Belief in Sanctification as a separate, second work of grace apart from salvation.
 - Belief in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a distinct, third work of grace accompanied by speaking in other tongues.

II. From this seemingly insignificant origin has grown one of the most influential worldwide Pentecostal denominations.

- For nearly 120 years the Church of God has been a distinctive movement focused upon communicating the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Presently, the Church of God has a world-wide membership of over 6 million with a presence in nearly 150 countries.

- Leaders of the Church of God are recognized as some of the most respected Pentecostal leaders of today.

III. The call of the Church of God today beckons back to those early days at Barney Creek. Church of God congregations around the globe are experiencing the fire of the Holy Spirit today more than ever.

Reports of revivals where hundreds are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit are frequent and on-going. The call of the Church of God is for world evangelization. It is a call to discipleship and prayer. It is a call of commitment. It is a call for the Church of God to be a channel for Pentecostal revival well into the new millennium.

For nearly 120 years, the COG has been a distinctive movement focused upon communicating the Gospel in the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Over 6,000,000 in membership with a presence in nearly 150 countries.

The COG has schools, Bible Colleges, and Seminaries throughout the world training leaders for the Church.

- For further information on the history of the Church God, recommended reading is the book **Like A Mighty Army**, by Dr. Charles W. Conn.

IV. The Church of God was founded in 1886 upon the principles of Christ as they are revealed in the Bible, the Word of God. It has its foundation of faith and practice in the Scriptures and the vital experience of its constituents is scripturally oriented.

- **CHRISTIAN**

First and foremost, the Church of God is a determinedly Christian church.

- It is built upon the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- The doctrines and practices of the church are based upon His teachings.

- **PROTESTANT**

The Church of God is founded upon the principles of Protestantism, although it is not a traditional follower of any specific leader of the Protestant Reformation.

- The denomination stands firmly for justification by faith, the priesthood of believers, the authority of the Bible, religious freedom, and the separation of church and state.
- It stands against abuses and extravagance of ecclesiastical ritualism and dogmatism.

- **FOUNDATIONAL**

The Church of God subscribes to the following five foundational Christian doctrines:

- The inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible.
- The virgin birth and complete deity of Christ.
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ's death for the sins of the world.
- The literal resurrection of the body.
- Christ's second coming in bodily form to earth.

- **EVANGELICAL**

Evangelical is the term used to describe those who affirm the primary doctrines revealed in the Scriptures.

- These doctrines include the inspiration and authority of the Word of God; the Trinity; the deity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ; salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ; His bodily resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father; the ministry of the Holy Spirit; the second coming of Christ; and the spiritual unity of believers in Jesus Christ.
- The Church of God has aligned itself with the basic statement of faith of NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) the largest association of Evangelicals in the USA. Members of NAE subscribe to a common statement of faith.
- The Church of God can be described as positioned in the mainstream of Evangelical Protestantism.

- **PENTECOSTAL**

In 1896, many members of the Church of God experienced a spiritual outpouring they identified as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- Because it was so similar to the experience of the early Christians on the day of Pentecost, it came to be called a Pentecostal experience, an enrichment of the Christian life through the power of the Holy Spirit that empowered believers to be effective witnesses of Christ.
- The principle distinctive of the Church of God as a Pentecostal organization is its believe in speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance and that this is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- **CHARISMATIC**

The charismata (Gk.) or gifts of the Spirit appeared early in the life and ministry of the Church of God.

- The gifts can be divided into three categories: the gifts of revelation, the gifts of power and the gifts of utterance or inspiration.

§ The gifts of revelation are the gifts of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits.

§ The gifts of power are faith, miracles, and gifts of healing.

§ The gifts of utterance and inspiration are prophecy, tongues and interpretation.

- The Holy Spirit bestows these gifts and those who accept the validity of these gifts are called charismatic.

- **EVANGELISTIC**

From its inception the Church of God has been a revival movement.

- Evangelism has been in the forefront of all its activities.

- The church has maintained an aggressive effort to take the message of Christ throughout the world by all means and methods.
- Every program of the church reflects an evangelistic attitude: revivalism, conferences, worship services, teaching, preaching and its missionary efforts.

- **ORGANIZED**

The magnitude of the Great Commission requires a united effort.

§ This united endeavor is efficiently served by guidance, support, resources and leadership from a common center.

§ The Church of God is centrally organized. Centralized church government is administration from the international, state or territorial and local levels.

§ It helps facilitate the fulfillment of the mission of the church.

- The control of the Church of God rests with the laity and ministers, who jointly form a governing body called the General Assembly which meets biennially.

- Benefits of centralized government include the following:

§ uniformity of doctrine and practice;

§ principles that bind together local churches in the same manner;

§ membership commitments in all churches;

§ expansion and extension of fellowship;

§ accountability;

§ cooperative decision-making;

§ and united efforts in evangelism and world outreach.

- **MINISTERS AND LAITY**

Ministers and laity are full partners in ministry throughout every area of the church.

- Ministers in the Church of God are ranked as:
 - Ordained Bishop,
 - Ordained,
 - Exhorter,
 - Minister of music and
 - Minister of Christian education.
- They achieve these levels of ministry through a profession of faith, commitment to the church, training, internship and fulfillment of credential requirements.
- The Church of God emphasizes the doctrinal position of the priest-hood of all believers and encourages laity to assume a Biblical role in local church ministry.

- **EDUCATION**

Emphasis upon education and training is a priority of the Church of God. Educational opportunities are provided from local congregations through institutions of higher learning at the international level of the church.

- **UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND SCHOOLS**

Lee University, located in Cleveland, Tennessee, is the Church of God's oldest and largest educational institution at over 3,500 students. Founded in 1918, it offers graduate and undergraduate degrees in more than 55 areas of study. Other institutions include Lee University Charlotte Center (Charlotte, North Carolina), European Bible Seminary (Rudersburg, Germany), Han Young Theological University (Seoul, Korea), International Bible College (Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada), Patten College (Oakland, California), Puerto Rico Bible College, School of Ministry (Cleveland, Tennessee) and Western School of Christian Ministry (Fresno,

California). In addition, World Missions maintains 80 Bible Schools around the world. Founded in 1975 and one of only six Pentecostal seminaries in the U.S., the Church of God Theological Seminary (Cleveland, Tennessee) is the denomination's largest graduate institution. It offers masters and doctoral programs. Lee University and Han Young Theological University also offer graduate studies.

- **A CARING CHURCH**

From its beginnings, the Church of God has felt its responsibility to benevolence ministries. The church operates a number of specialized programs and institutions.

- **Homes For Children**

The Church of God operates three homes for children in the United States. These include the Smoky Mountain Children's Home, Sevierville, Tennessee, North Carolina Home for Children, Kannapolis, N.C., and the South Carolina Home for Children, Mauldin, S.C. There are also many children's homes and mission works around the world.

- **Youth and Unwed Mothers**

Heart of Florida Youth Ranch, Citra, Florida, and New River Ranch, Fayetteville, West Virginia, offer help and counseling for troubled boys and teens. Covenant Place, Seymour, Tennessee, is a private home for unwed mothers choosing the right to life.

- **Operation Compassion**

Several benevolence ministries including Helping Hands (providing medical assistance), Children of the World (children's needs worldwide) and Caravan of Compassion (inner city ministry) operate under the umbrella of Church of God Operation Compassion.

- **Chaplaincy Ministries**

Hundreds of Church of God chaplains serve a worldwide ministry in full-time and voluntary positions. They are chaplains and counselors in hospitals, jails, prisons and countless other agencies and institutions.

- **MINISTRY TO THE MILITARY**

Due to the vast number of U.S. servicemen and women worldwide, the Church of God maintains ministry centers around the world. Listed below are the two areas that are involved in our ministry to the military.

- Servicemen's Centers

There are more than two dozen Church of God sponsored servicemen's centers operating in twelve countries around the globe. These centers offer fellowship, counseling and worship opportunities for servicemen and women on the field.

- Military Chaplaincy

The Chaplains Commission is vitally active in ministering to military personnel and their families. Ordained military Chaplains now serve in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard as well as the National Guard and Reserves. More than 100 Church of God ministers are active as military, reserve, institutional, correctional/law enforcement or specialized chaplains.

- **RESOURCES**

- Publishing House

Through the Church of God Publishing House and Pathway Press located in Cleveland, Tennessee, individuals can have access to a variety of printed materials including Sunday School literature, music and a variety of inspirational and religious books. The Publishing House produces denominational publications, such as the Evangel magazine, and offers an avenue for churches and ministries to obtain resources.

- Pathway Bookstore

Pathway Bookstore offers a full line of inspirational materials and resources for the local church.

- **SOCIAL CONCERNS**

The Church of God states its position on many issues of importance and global events through resolutions adopted at the biennial General Assembly. A copy of more than 40 resolutions adopted since 1968 may be obtained by contacting the International Offices.

- **WORLD MISSIONS**

The heart of World Missions ministry is the implementation of a global strategy of evangelism, church planting and training. Its scriptural purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ; share Christ's love for the world; minister to the totality of human need; bring men and women to

the knowledge of God and His redeeming grace; and obey Christ by confessing Him to the world. Today, Church of God missions is carried out in 157 countries organized in eight geographical regions.

• **Missionaries**

World Missions provides missionary services through the following: teaching or administering in educational institutions and programs; serving in medical ministries; planting new churches; working in relief and development efforts; and many other areas. Men and Women of Action exists as a humanitarian program. It organizes relief efforts following natural disasters and assists in church building projects around the globe. Volunteers in Medical Missions (VIMM) provides medical care and supplies to needy areas around the world. The Church of God provides avenues of outreach for the organization and supplies are provided through private donations.

**Comparison Chart of Beliefs of the Assemblies of God and
The Church of God International, Cleveland, TN**

	Assemblies of God		Church of God, Cleveland, TN
1.	WE BELIEVE...The Scriptures are Inspired by God and declare His design and plan for mankind.	1.	WE BELIEVE...In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
2.	WE BELIEVE...There is only One True God—revealed in three persons...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (commonly known as the Trinity).	2.	WE BELIEVE...In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3.	WE BELIEVE...In the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God's Son Jesus was both human and divine.	3.	WE BELIEVE...That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.
4.	WE BELIEVE...though originally good, Man Willingly Fell to Sin—ushering evil and death, both physical and spiritual, into the world.	4.	WE BELIEVE...That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.

5.	WE BELIEVE...Every Person Can Have Restored Fellowship with God Through 'Salvation' (accepting Christ's offer of forgiveness for sin).	5.	WE BELIEVE...That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
9.	WE BELIEVE...Sanctification Initially Occurs at Salvation and is not only a declaration that a believer is holy, but also a progressive lifelong process of separating from evil as believers continually draw closer to God and become more Christlike.	6.	WE BELIEVE...In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.
		7.	WE BELIEVE...Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
7.	WE BELIEVE...the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a Special Experience Following Salvation that empowers believers for witnessing and effective service, just as it did in New Testament times.	8.	WE BELIEVE...In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.
8.	WE BELIEVE... The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is 'Speaking in Tongues,' as experienced on the Day of Pentecost and referenced throughout Acts and the Epistles.	9.	WE BELIEVE...In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
6.	WE BELIEVE...and practice two ordinances— (1) Water Baptism by Immersion after repenting of one's sins and receiving Christ's gift of salvation, and (2) Holy Communion (the Lord's Supper) as a symbolic remembrance of Christ's suffering and death for our salvation.	10.	WE BELIEVE...In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
12.	WE BELIEVE...Divine Healing of the Sick is a Privilege for Christians Today and is provided for in Christ's atonement	11.	WE BELIEVE...Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.
		12.	WE BELIEVE...In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet.
13.	WE BELIEVE...in The Blessed Hope—When Jesus Raptures His Church Prior to His Return to Earth (the second coming). At this future moment in time, all believers who have died will rise from their graves and will meet the Lord in the air, and Christians who are alive will be caught up with them, to be with the Lord forever.	13.	WE BELIEVE...In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.

15.	WE BELIEVE...A Final Judgment Will Take Place for those who have rejected Christ. They will be judged for their sin and consigned to eternal punishment in a punishing lake of fire.	14.	WE BELIEVE...In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.
14.	WE BELIEVE...in The Millennial Reign of Christ when Jesus returns with His saints at His second coming and begins His benevolent rule over earth for 1,000 years. At that time, many in the nation of Israel will recognize and accept Him as the Messiah, the Savior who died for them and all mankind.		
10.	WE BELIEVE...The Church has a Mission to seek and save all who are lost in sin. We believe 'the Church' is the Body of Christ and consists of the people who, throughout time, have accepted God's offer of redemption (regardless of religious denomination) through the sacrificial death of His son Jesus Christ.		
11.	WE BELIEVE...A Divinely Called and Scripturally Ordained Leadership Ministry Serves the Church. The Bible teaches that each of us under leadership must commit ourselves to reach others for Christ, to worship Him with other believers, and to build up or edify the body of believers—the Church.		
16.	WE BELIEVE...and look forward to the perfect New Heavens and a New Earth that Christ is preparing for all people, of all time, who have accepted Him. We will live and dwell with Him there forever following His millennial reign on Earth. 'And so shall we forever be with the Lord!'		

Bibliography

www.ag.org

www.churchofgod.cc

Pastor Jim Garrett

[Return to Garrett Ministries Home page](#)