

*Keeping
Faith
Alive
Today*

**N. Vawser
C. Crowe
G. Waugh**



© Nevin Vawser, Colville Crowe, Geoff Waugh

First published by the The Joint Board of Christian Education of Australia and New Zealand, 1977.

Photos by Will Rolland.

Reproduced and reset, 2010

Printed by CreateSpace, Charleston, SC, USA, 2010

ISBN: 1456435337

EAN-13: 9781456435332.

[We need and value your positive comment or review on Amazon or Kindle to inform and bless others](#)

[Renewal Journal offers free eBooks for your Amazon Cloud library](#)

[Blog of this book](#)

[Renewal Journal Publications](#)

www.renewaljournal.com

Brisbane, Qld, Australia



Logo: lamp & scroll,
basin & towel,
in the light of the cross

Contents

Two Sessions on Prayer

by Nevin Vawser

1 New Ways to Pray

2 What Did I Discover?

Two Sessions on Using the Bible

by Colville Crowe

3 Try Reading the Bible

4 Share Your Experiences

Two Sessions on Life in the Spirit

by Geoff Waugh

5 Faith Alive in Personal Life

6 Faith Alive in Community

Appendix: Renewal Journal Publications

Book Images

Keeping Faith Alive Today

is about building a strong devotional life – a life in which prayer, Bible reading, and the presence and influence of God’s Holy Spirit are vital forces.

The studies combine discoveries from the Bible and the experience of others with discoveries from your own experience.

Here is an invitation to discover in practice ways of keeping your faith alive.

Two Sessions on Prayer

TWO SESSIONS ON PRAYER

by Nevin Vawser

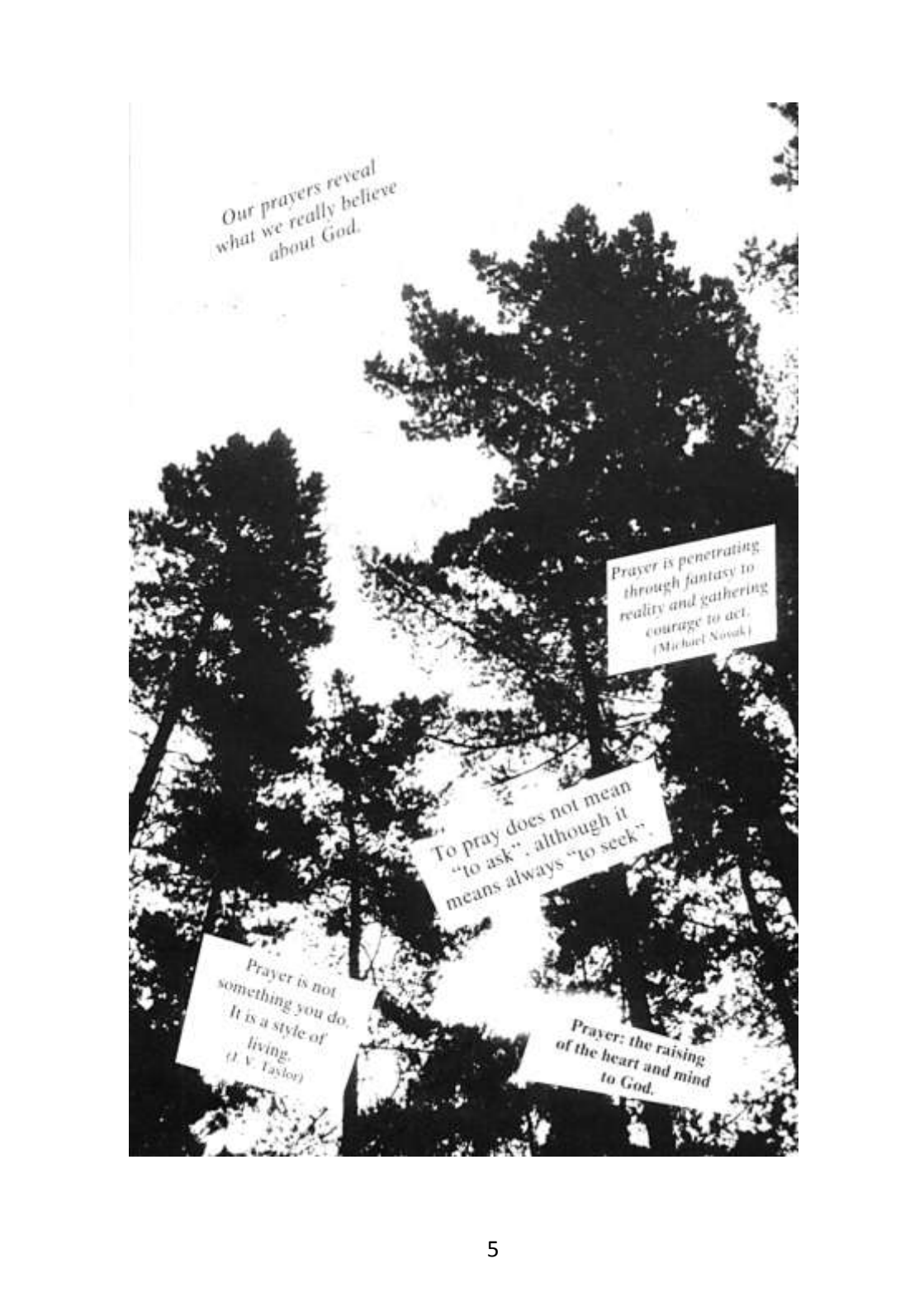


SESSION

1



**New
Ways
to Pray**



Our prayers reveal
what we really believe
about God.

Prayer is penetrating
through fantasy to
reality and gathering
courage to act.
(Michael Novak)

To pray does not mean
"to ask", although it
means always "to seek".

Prayer is not
something you do.
It is a style of
living.
(J. V. Taylor)

Prayer: the raising
of the heart and mind
to God.

Session 1. New Ways to Pray

1. [5 min] Study the comments on prayer on the previous page and choose the one that means most to you. Then choose two people with whom you would like to work. Sit down in groups of three and discuss your chosen statements and what they mean to you.

2. [5 min] Remaining in the same groups, each person is to take a turn to complete this sentence: "My greatest difficulty in praying is . . ."

3. [15 min] Prayer is more effective when people pray expecting results rather than pleading. But the expectations must be in line with God's will. There is a method of prayer which brings these two guidelines together.

- Read (remaining in the same small groups):

"May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice! Show a gentle attitude towards everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:4-7.

- Complete in turn the following sentence: "The feeling about prayer which came to me from the passage was"
- Noting the words " in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart", each person is to mention a problem (personal or otherwise) and then offer a prayer about it, expressed in "thank you" terms.

Why not pray for yourself and others during the week using the "thank you" method? Name the person, think of the situation - then thank God that he is at work in that person and situation. Keep it brief; do it often.

Expect God to act, but don't tell him what to do!

4. [10 min] This time choose two people with whom you have not worked so far, if possible.

- FANTASY TRIP: Get comfortable. Close your eyes. You are travelling to work or school or to the city on a shopping trip. Visualise the journey from beginning to end. Imagine the kinds of people, the scenes and the situations you see regularly.

“Arrow prayers” are for busy people. They can be sent quickly at any time, in any place, dealing with any situation. In your group of three, share what arrow prayers you could send to God about people, problems, situations or scenes from your trip. Make sure the time available is shared equally.

- If you still have time, discuss other ways in which Christians can “practise the presence of Christ” in today’s world.

5. [10 min] Unfortunately, meditation is not used in prayer by Westerners as much as by people in the Middle East, India and Asia. Jesus probably used it frequently ...

“Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of the town to a lonely place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35.

Even five minutes meditation, on your own or with others, conscious of Christ’s presence, can be a very significant experience.

- Read: “And I tell you more: whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.” Matthew 18:19-20.

- Sit in a circle, lights turned low if at night. The leader gives the following steps to relaxation - slowly:

Sit comfortably with legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor. Place hands unclasped in lap. Imagine your arms and legs are heavy - made of lead with no feeling. Let the tension drain out of your muscles in your face, shoulders, stomach. Imagine your head is floating - needing no support. Breathe more deeply several times, then forget your breathing.

Now look at your mind - quieten your thoughts. Hand over any problems or urgent matters to Christ. Visualise this by seeing yourself hand over a parcel to him. In your mind, thank Jesus that he is there

with the group. In silence say, "Thank You, Lord" several times. Let the silence take over. Reach out to Jesus with your thinking.

FIVE MINUTES OF SILENCE

- To conclude, as the leader mentions each member of the group by name, let members direct Christ's blessing to that member, in silence. This can be done by visualising Christ standing with his hands on that person, or by "directing" God's love towards the person.
6. A contract is an agreed plan of action. To be effective it should be
- SPECIFIC
ACHIEVABLE
MEASURABLE

[10 min] Complete this personal contract on how you will pray between now and when the group meets again.

My prayer contract

I,, contract to try to achieve the following goals:

1

2

3

Strategy (steps I need to take and when I intend to take them):

1

2

3

4

7. [2 min] To bring the study to an end, form a circle, holding hands, and say the blessing together, with eyes open, looking around the group at the faces of the members: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.”

Session 2. What Did I Discover?

SESSION

2



What
Did
I Discover?

There is a certain rhythm in the process of religious growth. A person moves from a “magical” religion through a legal one to a fully personal religious experience. At first, God is a Santa Claus, who gives gifts, a Superman who can do anything, an old Father Time. Magical expressions surround the realities of sacraments, of sin, of prayer. Grace is a green stamp issued to trade in for heaven, and prayer is a self-centred “gimme”. Slowly a person learns to say “Thank You!” But understanding and freely living these words requires more time. We become preoccupied with legalisms and see God as a Judge, as one who condemns and rewards us for keeping the rules. Prayer becomes the repetition of memorised formulae, recited at meals and before bed. A personal religion develops when God is seen as a Friend. In a relationship founded on love, prayer becomes a deeply personal communication - the mature Christians share their hopes, anxieties, concerns, disappointments and needs with a Friend. The magic and legal levels gradually find their authentic mystery and responsibility in this personal religious growth.

Robert J. Heyer, SJ and Richard J. Payne, *Discovery in Prayer*. New York: Paulist Press, 1969,

1. [5 min] Take another look at the prayer statements on page 5. Do any have a new significance? Think about it.

AND/OR

Move around the room greeting other members of the group non-verbally - with your eyes, or holding hands, or embracing if appropriate - directing God’s love to those being greeted.

2. [10 min] In groups of three, first individually look at the contract drawn up at the last session and answer these questions by writing in the margin beside the contract -

- (a) In what ways did I fulfil my contract?
- (b) In what ways did I fail in my contract?

Then share answers in the small group, allowing about a minute for each person.

3. [15 min] Move into one circle. Remembering the resources so far used - statements, Bible readings and personal experiences - share what insights have been received about prayer and praying. If you have time you could read some of the Bible passages again, AND/OR read and discuss the statement about prayer at the top of page 9.

4. [10 min] Write a new personal prayer contract for the future in the light of insights received, remembering that it must be:

- SPECIFIC
- ACHIEVABLE
- MEASURABLE

My prayer contract

I,, contract to try to achieve the following goals:

1

2

3

Strategy (steps I need to take and when I intend to take them):

1

2

3

4

5. [10 min] Sitting in one circle, share contracts in turn. After being read, the contracts are placed in the centre, but are retrieved and taken home after the session.

6. [5 min] Stand in a circle around the contracts, perhaps holding hands. In silence, at the leader’s instruction, bless the person on your right. If you are holding hands, a “non-verbal blessing” might be passed around the circle as each person in turn squeezes the hand of the person on his or her right. Say the blessing together, looking at the faces around the group.



[Back to Contents](#)

Two Sessions on Using The Bible

TWO SESSIONS ON USING THE BIBLE

by Colville Crowe

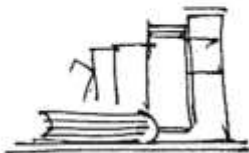
Use the Bible

How?

*NOT as a handy kind
of book to have around
the house . . .*



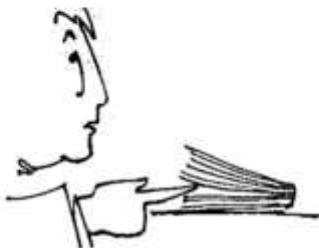
*NOT as a
reference
work . . .*



*NOT as a
badge of
faith and
devotion .*



*NOT as a
random
collection
of divine
messages . . .
but as a good book to read!*



Session 3. Try Reading the Bible

SESSION

3



TRY READING THE BIBLE

A. Read it yourself

1. [10 min] Even in Bible study groups it's possible to spend more time discussing Bible reading than reading the Bible, or discussing questions about what it means, without spending enough time to work out what it means to you.

So, for a start, let's read by ourselves Matthew 4:1-11. Take 10 minutes to read and think about it. These questions may be helpful. They're not for group discussion, just for individual thinking –

- Does your past reading of other parts of the Bible help you to understand and appreciate this passage?
- Notice how Jesus used the Bible in answering the Devil. Does your Bible reading help you in facing problems?
- The Devil quotes the Bible too (Matthew 4:6)! How can we avoid getting the idea that “you can prove anything from the Bible”?
- If you have time, read the story in Mark 1:12-13 also. It's a shorter version, yet it mentions something which Matthew doesn't mention.
- Did you learn anything new from these readings? Did you expect to?

2. [10 min] “THE UNITING CHURCH LAYS UPON HER MEMBERS THE SERIOUS DUTY OF READING THE SCRIPTURES...”

Take 10 minutes to talk together about this statement from the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia, paragraph 5, using the following questions –

- What are some things which you would class as “serious duties” in your job/studies/home?

How do you tackle them? Do you
set aside time?
plan ahead?

get help from others?
get special tuition?
discipline yourself to keep at it?

- Are there members of the group who use particular methods or systems for their individual Bible readings? (For example, by following a series of readings suggested by the Bible Society, or by using notes from the International Bible Reading Association, Scripture Union, the Bible Reading Fellowship, etc.) In what ways are these helpful? Ten minutes will give time only to open up these questions together. There will be more time for further discussion at the next session - see the "homework" (!) section on page 17.
Now, hasten on ...

B. Share it with a friend

- [5 min] We can share the Bible's faith-boosting effect with friends by telling them about things in our recent reading which have lifted our hearts/minds/hopes. Take 5 minutes for quick sharing of this kind. You may want to mention specially interesting or helpful or challenging passages you've read lately.
- You may want to talk about a new translation you are reading.
- You may want to share a verse or a word from the Bible that has popped into focus for you.
- You may want to read a verse that's become prayer for you.

2. [10 min] We can share the Bible with "friends" of the wider Christian community, too, by reading. It's great to be part of the church and have people whom we never see in person share their understanding and appreciation of the Bible with us through new translations, notes in the margin, commentaries, meditations, concordances, hymns and songs.

Take 10 minutes to read Ian Shevill's meditation on Matthew 4:1-11, "Winning Friends and Influencing People" (pages 15-16)

and/or

to sing together a song that arises from the same passage: "Seek first the kingdom of God" (Search Songbook, No 3), with this added verse:

"Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word

That proceeds from the mouth of God.
Alielu . . .”

WINNING FRIENDS AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE

- A Lenten meditation

*“Feed them ... fascinate them ... force them”,
these are the techniques we humans have devised
to win friends and influence people.*

*It all starts in the playground,
where the grubby boy, seeking an ally,
offers to share his play lunch
or to lend his puzzle,
or simply sits on his mate pounding him
until he says ,yes” to the proposition.*

*And then in his teens, the same boy in his sharp rig,
wanting to impress his girl,
takes her to lunch ... with all the trimmings,
or takes her to the pictures,
or simply takes her by storm.*

*Whilst in maturity the same game goes on,
as the tycoon clinches his deal
by dining and wining his customer,
by taking him to the strip joint,
and if necessary forcing him to the wall
by every twist of the economic screw.*

*And so by food, fascination, and force - we seek to influence each other.
And we are all at it in different ways,
the teacher, the manager, the advertiser,
the professor, the politician, and the parson.*

*Forgetting always
that the only things this technique fails to produce
are the only things really worthwhile in life,
things like love and loyalty, devotion and dedication.*

*You knew all about this, Lord,
when you were tempted in the wilderness,
during those forty days and nights we now call Lent.*

*As you meditated on that million dollar enigma
which today enthalls the brains of Madison Avenue
as they seek an answer to the question,
“How best to get the message across?”*

*It was at this time the Devil suggested to you
the old human techniques.*

*Feed them ... fascinate them ... force them,
but each time you gave the same answer -
"Get thee behind me Satan".*

***"if thou be the Son of God," he whispered, "command this stone that it be
bread.***

If their stomachs are full, men will listen to spiritual truths,"
but it doesn't work out that way.

*The more affluent the society, the less concerned it appears about the soul,
As is seen in affluent Scandinavia, where the suicide rate spirals.*

And then it came again.

***"If thou be the Son of God," said Satan,
cast thyself down from the top of the temple,"***

and "He shall give his angels charge over thee.
*Fascinate the people by being the first flying man,
then they will listen to your gospel."*

But it doesn't work out that way.

*You had seen them, Lord, those conjurers and mountebanks in the market place,
holding the minds of the multitude until the miracle was past ...
then they went home and forgot.*

And then it came the third time,

***"If thou wilt worship me," came the whisper,
"I shall give thee power over all the kingdoms of the world."***

In other words, "Become a national hero, force them to believe."

But it doesn't work out that way.

*For you have seen the Roman Legions compelling obedience whilst they
were there.*

*It was a short lived obedience
which evaporated as the sound of marching feet died away.*

And so to each temptation, Lord, you replied,

***"Get thee behind me Satan,
for the techniques of man seldom fulfil the purposes of God.***

*It was not by feeding them, fascinating them, or forcing them
that you chose to bring the Kingdom of God on earth,
but ... by loving them ... even to an end which was brutally bitter.*

*And that is why, Lord, 2000 years later,
we still attempt to believe your words and to do your will.
Because you loved us.*

*Help me, Lord, to see that it is only love
that will win friends and influence people*

for causes which are either temporal or eternal. AMEN.

Ian Shevill, *Going It - With God* (Lutterworth Press, London, 1968), pages 82-85. Used by permission.



C. Celebrate it all together

1. [5 min] What do you see in the Good News Bible symbol, shown here? The symbol has several possible interpretations.

Take 5 minutes to hear what it means to people in the group. Some suggestions from the Bible Society are on page 18, but share the group's ideas first. (Looking at it together often helps you to see things that you might never have noticed alone.)

2. [5 min] If you still have time, and copies of the Good News Bible with pictures, look up the pictures relating to Matthew 18:12 and 21:9. Discuss what you see. Did the group together see more than you, as an individual?

HOMEWORK or "TRY IT OUT IN PRACTICE"

Take five minutes to mark which of the following you are going to do. Include at least one suggestion from each of the three sections.

A. Try this yourself

- For a week - or however long it is until you meet again for the next session -

Read the same passage (Matthew 4:1 -1 1) every day.

OR

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-25 (the passage from which Jesus quoted twice) every day

OR

Read Psalm 91 (the passage from which the Devil quoted) every day.

OR

Continue using your usual daily Bible reading notes.

- Whichever you choose to do, pray about the passage as you read. Ask yourself how it affects your thinking during the day. If you've read it before, is it boring?

- And if you do use daily notes or a commentary or some other aid to devotional Bible reading, don't forget to take a sample copy to the next group session.

B. Try this with a friend or with as many as three others

Get together between now and the next session and

compose a song

OR

write a meditation

OR

make up a prayer

in which you share the ideas you find together in Matthew 16:13-26, or part of that passage. (it includes the other time when Jesus said "Get away from me, Satan!")

Be prepared to share with the whole group at the next session.

C. Try this, everyone

"Does reading the Bible together help to keep our faith alive? If so, how?" Answer these questions by coming to the next session prepared to report on one of the following:

Bible reading in a Bible study group

OR

hearing the Bible read in public worship

OR

Bible reading in family worship at home

OR

hearing the Bible read in school assembly.

Would you like to sing a magnificent Psalm at the next session? Joseph Gelineau has provided a fine musical setting for Psalm 136. A Roman Catholic friend may be able to get you the words and music. Someone in the group with an interest in music could learn the Psalm and be prepared to teach everyone at the next session. In some collections the Psalm is numbered 135, so check with your Bible to make sure you have the right one, beginning, "Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good".

The Bible Society makes these suggestions about the Good News Bible symbol: a cross; a star; four people reading; a family of four: four corners of the earth.

Session 4. Share Your Experiences

SESSION

4



Share Your Experiences

A. What you did alone

1 [5 min] Discuss your individual reading of the Bible since the last session.

Does such reading help to keep your faith alive? Why, or why not?

What difficulties have you found arising in your reading?

2 [5 min] Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9 together.

What present-day customs would you compare with what the people of Israel were told to do?

Why do people put stickers of places or football teams on their cars?

Why do they want to wear pictures of pop stars or advertisements for Southern Comfort on their chests?

Would wearing Bible verses on your chest help to keep your faith alive?

3 [5 min] What method of using the Bible has been most helpful to you as an individual reader? Share samples of daily notes, etc.

B. What you did with someone else

1 [10 min] Open your Bibles to Matthew 16. Listen together to the songs, meditations, prayers which groups wrote.

2 [10 min] What other kinds of sharing have enriched your life during the past week? What activities or interests need to be shared if they are to deepen, grow, develop for you?

Has sharing in working through the Bible passage helped your faith to grow?

What other ways are there of sharing the message of the Bible with a friend or a group of friends?

C. Sharing in a larger group

1 [5 min] Share reports on reading the Bible together in a church, home or school setting.

2 [10 min] Sing together Psalm 136 (Gelineau setting);

OR

Read Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26 from the Good News Bible or your own, using the refrain “His love is eternal” as a group response.

OR

Sing together “Seek first the kingdom of God” (Search Songbook, No 3)

Share:

- Will these words or this tune stick in your mind?

What other words/tunes tend to “stick”? Why?

- How important as a way of making messages stick in your mind is reading/hearing/singing in a large group?

[Back to Contents](#)

Two Sessions on Life in the Spirit

TWO SESSIONS ON LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

by Geoff Waugh

The Bible describes the activity of God's Spirit in our lives in various ways. For example, different verbs describe the impact or influence of the Holy Spirit on human lives:

he is poured out,
he comes down,
he stays or remains on or in or with us,
he leads, guides and tells,
he is upon us,
he chooses and sends,
 and we are filled,
 baptised in or with,
 may receive him,
 and may be full of him.

Scripture readings using these terms include

Joel 2:28-29

Luke 3:16; 4:18-19

John 1:32-34; 14:16-17; 16:13-15

Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4; 6:3-5; 8:17; 9:17; 10:44-48; 19:6

Galatians 4:6-7

Ephesians 5:18.

Note the variety of ways Scripture explains the work of the Spirit. As you work through these sessions, something of that variety will become evident in your discussion.

There are far more activities suggested than you will be able to use in two sessions. Select those that suit your group best. (Perhaps you will want to extend the number of sessions.) Many of the activities are things that you can try out or continue doing long after this study series has ended.

Session 5. Faith Alive – in personal life

SESSION

5



**Faith Alive –
in personal life**

A. Reviewing the past

1 [15 min] How has faith grown in you and in others in the group? Choose one of these activities to stimulate sharing and discussion: When did “God” become more than just a word to you? Tell the others about it.

Draw your own “spiritual graph” on blank paper, showing the high and low points in your growth so far towards Christian maturity. Share with the group.

What have been significant turning points in your life? Tell the others about a few of these.

BIBLE RESOURCE

2. [15 min] After you have shared something of your own growth, note briefly the turning points or significant moments in the lives of Bible people, especially the ones you can identify with the most:

Abraham heads into the unknown (Genesis 12:1-3)

Moses reluctantly obeys God (Exodus, chapters 3 and 4)

David’s sin and repentance (2 Samuel, chapters 11 and 12)

Solomon’s dream and request (2 Chronicles 1:1-12)

Young Jeremiah’s call and objection (Jeremiah 1:4-10)

Nehemiah’s concern and prayer (Nehemiah, chapter 1)

Jesus announces his mission (Luke 4:16-21)

Fishermen swap jobs (Mark 1: 16-20)

Saul (Paul) changes sides (Acts 9.1-19)

Do not take time to read all these references now. They provide background reading. Note especially how some of these examples may be similar to the experiences of people in the group.

B. Exploring the present

1 [10 min] As faith grows and we gain new insights into on the past and incorporate that into our present development. Reflect on where you are now, by using some of these sharing activities:

- At this stage in your life, what impresses you most about the life of Jesus, and why? Note the different perspectives of people in your group, and learn from one another.
- What is your “growing edge” at present? What are the areas in which you are being challenged or stretched as a person? (This may take quite a while to share together, so do not hurry over it. Allow time to listen and respond to one another.)
- Comment on what helps or satisfies you most at present. This may lead you - individually or as a group - to do something about increasing the amount of time you give to these significant areas of your life.

BIBLE STUDY

2 [10 min] Compare Jeremiah 31:31-33 with John 14:15-21. In what ways have you found these promises true for you? Note that people become aware of the Spirit of God in many different ways. This was so in the Bible, and is true in life today. Be open to the experiences of those in your group, and sensitive to the difficulties people have in trying to express the inexpressible. Galatians 4:6-7 is an important comment about the integrated harmony of God as Father, Son and Spirit.

C. Anticipating the future

[10 min] Christian faith looks to the future with assurance and confidence in God. Keeping faith alive today involves positive attitudes about God’s purposes in life and history, including events yet to be. Conclude your session together by choosing some of these activities. Some you may do

together, now. Others you may plan to do later, either alone or with others. All are likely to provide discussion and sharing points for your next session.

1. PRAYING

*Use conversational prayer (informal yarning together in prayer) for one another, commenting on issues raised in the session. This can make a fitting conclusion to your discussion.

*Focus on an empty chair. Imagine Jesus (or God's Spirit) sits with you in the room and talk to him with your eyes open, in the same way as you might talk to one another. (You can also do this alone at home.)

*Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a place of beautiful peace and harmony. Think about that place for a while in silence. Then imagine that Jesus comes to join you there in whatever way you think he might choose to come. What happens? You may like to share this with the group.

*Relax for a few moments in complete silence, tuning in to the heart of God on the pulse of the universe. (You can even do this in the midst of busyness and noise.)

2. SHARING

*If you did not use the spiritual graph in this session you could agree to do it at home and bring it to the next session.

*If you have not discussed your growing edge you could give this some thought before the next session and agree to begin with that.

*If you have not had time to comment on what activities help or satisfy you most, you could note those on paper before the next session, and begin then by sharing together.

*List the names of everyone in your group. Beside each name write which of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23) you see in that person. Share your observations.

*Some or all of the group may be able to plan an informal time together outside your group session. Possibilities include a barbecue, visiting someone's home, playing squash or tennis, an outing or picnic. You may be able to involve other members of your families as well.

3. RELATING TO OTHERS

All members of the group might agree to do one of the following between now and the next session. When you meet again it will be important to talk about what you have done, and its value.

*Spend some time telephoning friends to let them know you care about them, to encourage them, or to express your appreciation.

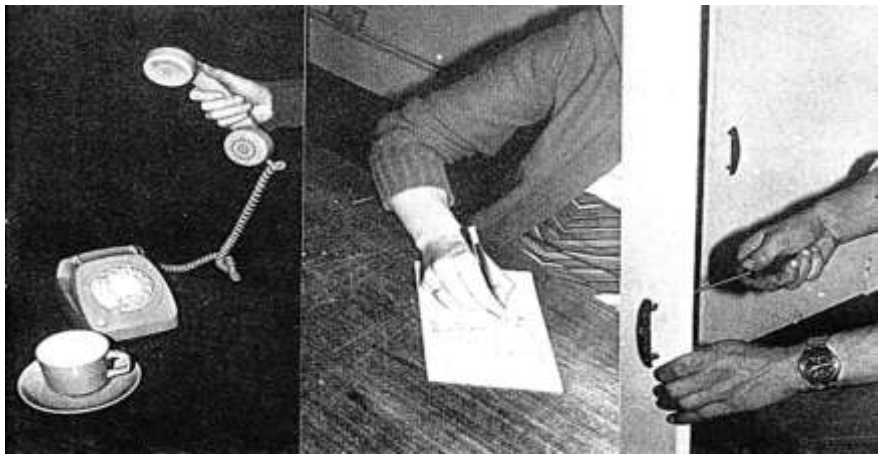
*Write a short note to someone, expressing appreciation.

*At the beginning of each day, write down some unexpected act of kindness that you will do for someone. Then do it.

*Plan something you will do every day which will influence someone else positively. For example, you might keep your room really tidy for a full week; wash up after meals; polish the family's shoes; catch up on overdue jobs around the house; answer your mail bit by bit; do voluntary jobs at work.

*Think of someone you have a quarrel with - or someone you would quarrel with if you did not shrink from the conflict. Make contact with that person and say how you feel. Try to resolve your differences in a way that will make possible a new relationship.

*Seek out someone whom you usually ignore because of differences - or imagined differences - in age, background, values, etc. Be ready to learn. Open yourself to the possibility of a new relationship.



4. TRYING NEW THINGS

From the following list, choose one or more activities that are new to you, try them, and report back to the rest of the group at the next session.

*Telephone someone specifically to pray with him/her.

*Write a daily journal commenting on how you see God at work in your life, especially in your relationships.

*Read the Bible. Using a modern version (e.g., the Good News Bible), read a book straight through without trying to study the passages in detail.

*Examine your life style. Note changes you would like to make. Dare you? How could the group help you?

*Get into bed, lie on your back, review the day by yarning about it with God. (Remember that he is unshockable and that all our thoughts and motives are an open book to him.)

*Pray with someone you love and trust about specific needs. Make physical contact with the other by holding hands or with arms upon shoulders.

*Say your mealtime “grace” by thanking God for anything you feel thankful about, with your eyes open.

*Read a passage from the Bible each day and then write down your personal responses to these three questions:

1 What were the key facts or ideas in the passage? (What *head* knowledge sums up the passage for you?)

2 How does the passage apply to me personally? (What is the *heart* of the meaning for you?)

3 What action must I now take? (What do you need to put your *hand* to?)

You could choose your passages from those listed next under “Preparing for the next session”.

5. PREPARING FOR THE NEXT SESSION

A number of Bible passages provide helpful background for the next session. Here are some that you might read:

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Acts 2:43-47 communal life in the Early Church

SHARING GOALS

Romans 15:1-2 helping each other

Galatians 6:1-2 sharing burdens

John 13:34-35 a new obligations

SHARING ABILITIES

Romans 12:6-8 our gifts are to share

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 our gifts are different

Ephesians 4:7,11 our gifts are from Christ



Session 6. Faith Alive – in community

SESSION

6



**Faith Alive –
in community**

A. Sharing experiences

[15 min] We learn from each other, and our lives grow fuller as we do. As we reflect on our own experiences and the experience of others, we can grow to new insights and new behaviour - such as greater openness to others' viewpoints, more love for others, a fuller commitment to one another. We learn by experience.

You can help to keep faith alive in your shared life as a group as you work through some of these activities:

- Talk about the particular things you did as an outcome of the last session, and what you learned from them.
- Talk about what you consider to have been your most significant learning experiences in the past week or so. Which were individual experiences? Which came about through involvement in a group?
- Talk about the kinds of things that promote growth in your life. How have other people helped you to grow lately?
- Talk about the ways in which the church community has helped / is helping / could help you to grow.
- Discuss Acts 2:43-47. What impresses you about the shared experience of the Early Church?

B. Sharing goals

Select one of these activities to build on A.

- Individually, spend a few moments thinking about your “ideal” Christian community. Share, and note common features. In what ways is your local church like/unlike the ideal? Where do you go from here?
- Talk about what changes you would like to see in your local church. Feel free to dream. Then consider - is this an impossible dream, or is it a goal to aim for? What steps need to be taken?
- List the ways in which your gifts or abilities – as individuals or as a group - are being used in the church. What other possibilities do you see for using your gifts? What action do you need to take?

C. Sharing abilities

Read Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7, 11.

In the light of these passages, work through one of the following activities together:

- Discuss: If we took these passages seriously - or at face value - what changes would it mean in our Christian community?
- Share what these passages say to you about your place in the church.
- Affirm one another’s gifts. Each one of you write your name on a blank sheet of paper and pass it to the person on your left. As you receive your neighbour’s sheet, write on it the gifts you see in that person, and pass the sheet on to the next person. Continue until everyone has received back his or her own sheet, with comments. (Note that this exercise is similar to one that you may have done in the previous session, listing gifts of the Spirit for each person.)

D. Concluding the session and the unit

- Take a few minutes to complete this plan for yourself.

My own plan

These are some of the things I must do if my spiritual life is to be fully alive

- Conclude the session in any appropriate way which grows out of your discussion and sharing. This may involve praying for one another about your plans, reflecting on the whole unit, celebrating, planning further action and/or sharing together.

LIFE ON A NEW PLANE

“... though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God his grace is wider and deeper still! The whole outlook changes – sin used to be the master of men and in the end handed them over to death: now grace is the ruling factor, with righteousness as its purpose and its end the bringing of men to the eternal life of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Now what is our response to be? Shall we sin to our heart’s content and see how far we can exploit the grace of God? What a ghastly thought! We, who have died to sin – how could we live in sin a moment longer? Have you forgotten that all of us who were baptised into Jesus Christ were, by that very action, sharing in his death? We were dead and buried with him in baptism, so that just as he was raised from the dead by that splendid revelation of the Father’s power so we too might rise on a new plane altogether.”

Paul to the Christians in Rome.
Romans 5:20 – 6:4. J B Phillips translation.
Collins Publishers. Used by permission.



[Back to Contents](#)

Books by Colville Crow

See Amazon.com

Your Kingdom Come: resources for prayer, study and preaching, 1979, JBCE

Letters about the Cross: by the Apostle Peter, the Apostle Paul, writer to the Hebrews, 1990, JBCE

Growing as Christians, edited by Colville Crowe, 1992, JBCE

You and I: Our Stories, Seongja Yoo-Crowe and Colville Crowe, 2000, UCA

Multicultural Ministry, two reports of meetings of the International Network Forum on Multicultural Ministry, published in cooperation with the Mission and Evangelism Team, World Council of Churches, 2000 and 2002, joint editor with Seongja Yoo Crowe

With Love to the World - a daily Bible reading guide of the Uniting Church in Australia: contributor when invited, since 1992, most recently Advent and Christmas issue 2010

Books by Geoff Waugh

See Amazon.com and RenewalJournal.com

APPENDIX: *Renewal Journal Publications*

www.renewaljournal.com

<https://renewaljournal.com> - Blogs

www.amazon.com - Look inside

www.bookdepository.com - Free airmail worldwide

See

www.renewaljournal.com

for Blogs on each book

PDF Books, eBooks, and Paperbacks

Available on
Amazon and Kindle
Most Paperbacks in both
Basic Edition and
Gift Edition (colour)

[Renewal Journal Publications](#)

<https://renewaljournal.blog/>

[PDF Books, eBooks, and Paperbacks](#)

[Most Paperbacks are in both](#)

[Basic Edition and](#)

[Gift Edition \(colour\)](#)

Revival Books

[Flashpoints of Revival](#)

[Revival Fires](#)

[South Pacific Revivals](#)

[Pentecost on Pentecost & the South Pacific](#)

[Great Revival Stories](#), comprising:

[Best Revival Stories](#) and

[Transforming Revivals](#)

[Renewal and Revival](#), comprising:

[Renewal: I make all things new](#), and

[Revival: I will pour out my Spirit](#)

[Anointed for Revival](#)

[Church on Fire](#)

[God's Surprises](#)

Renewal Books

Body Ministry, comprising:

The Body of Christ, Part 1: Body Ministry, and

The Body of Christ, Part 2: Ministry Education,
with

Learning Together in Ministry

Great Commission Mission comprising:

Teaching Them to Obey in Love, and

*Jesus the Model for Short Term Supernatural
Mission*

Living in the Spirit

Your Spiritual Gifts

Fruit & Gifts of the Spirit

Keeping Faith Alive Today

The Leader's Goldmine

Word and Spirit by Alison Sherrington

Study Guides

Signs and Wonders: Study Guide

The Holy Spirit in Ministry

Revival History

Holy Spirit Movements through History

Renewal Theology 1

Renewal Theology 2

Ministry Practicum

Devotional Books

[Inspiration](#)

[Jesus on Dying Regrets](#)

[The Christmas Message - The Queen](#)

[Holy Week, Christian Passover & Resurrection](#)

comprising:

[Holy Week](#), and

[Christian Passover Service](#), and

[Risen: 12 Resurrection Appearances](#)

[Risen: Short Version](#)

[Risen: Long version & our month in Israel](#)

[Mysterious Month - expanded version Risen:](#)

[Long version](#)

[Kingdom Life series](#)

[Kingdom Life: The Gospels](#) - comprising:

[Kingdom Life in Matthew](#)

[Kingdom Life in Mark](#)

[Kingdom Life in Luke](#)

[Kingdom Life in John](#)

[A Preface to the Acts of the Apostles](#)

[The Lion of Judah series](#)

[The Titles of Jesus](#)

[The Reign of Jesus](#)

[The Life of Jesus](#)

[The Death of Jesus](#)

[The Resurrection of Jesus](#)

[The Spirit of Jesus](#)

[The Lion of Judah](#) – all in one volume

[Discovering Aslan - comprising:](#)

[Discovering Aslan in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe](#)

[Discovering Aslan in Prince Caspian](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Silver Chair](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Horse and his Boy](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Magician's Nephew](#)

[Discovering Aslan in the Last Battle](#)

General Books

[*You Can Publish for Free*](#)

[*My First Stories* by Ethan Waugh](#)

[*An Incredible Journey by Faith* by Elisha Chowtapalli](#)

Biographical:

[*God's Surprises*](#)

[*Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal & Revival - Geoff's autobiography*](#)

[*Journey into Mission*](#) – Geoff's mission trips

[*Journey into Ministry and Mission*](#)

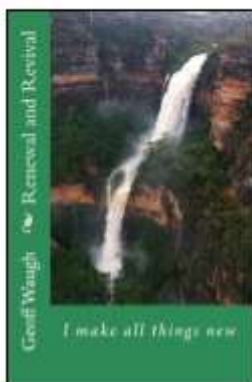
[*King of the Granny Flat* by Dante Waugh](#)

[*Exploring Israel*](#) – Geoff's family's trip

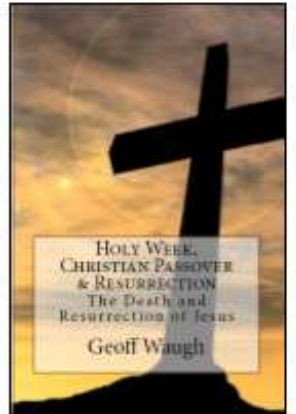
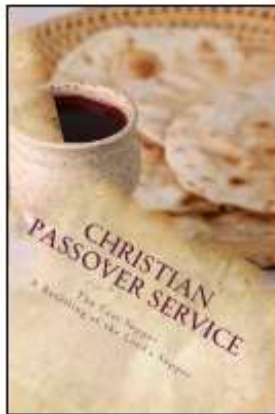
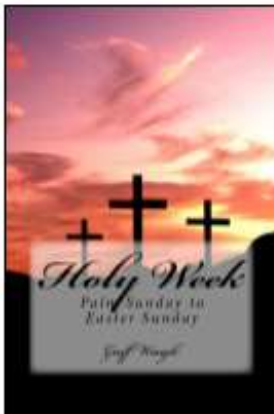
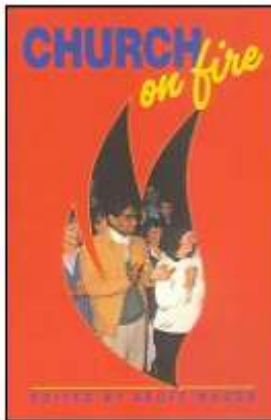
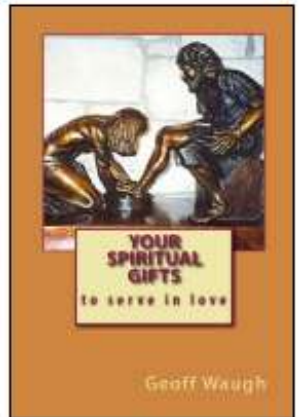
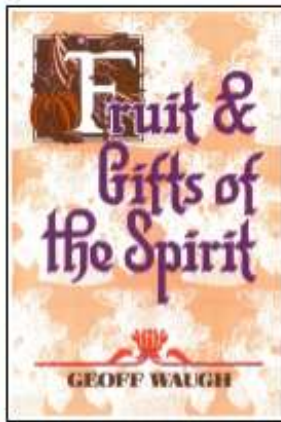
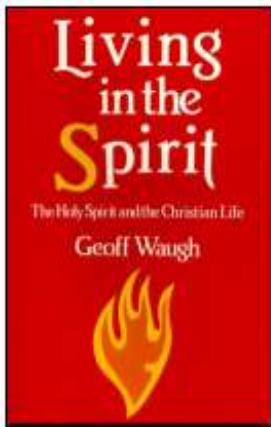
[*Light on the Mountains*](#) – Geoff in PNG

[*Travelling with Geoff* by Don Hill](#)

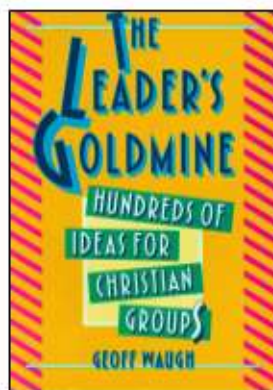
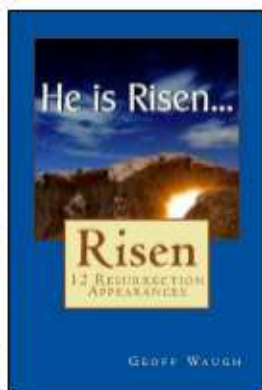
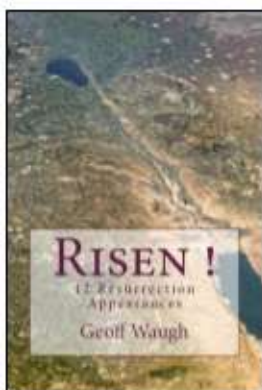
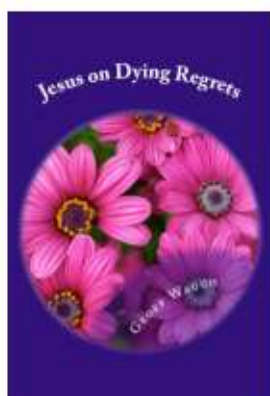
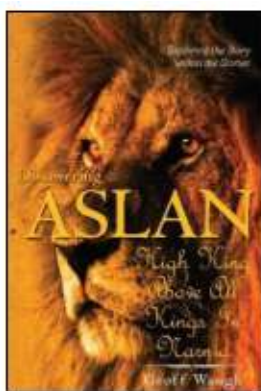
[*By All Means* by Elaine Olley](#)



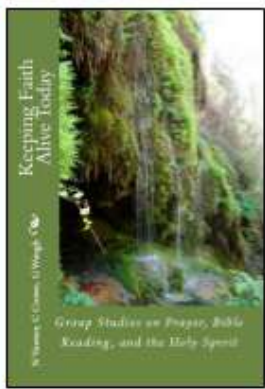
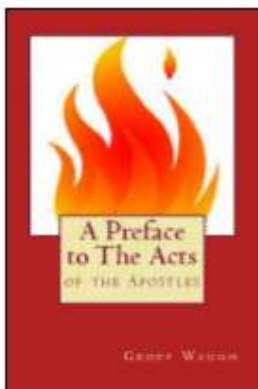
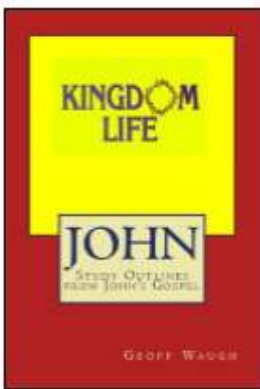
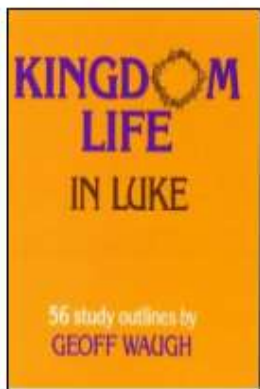
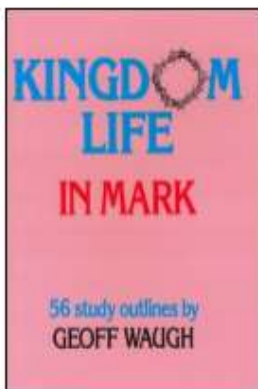
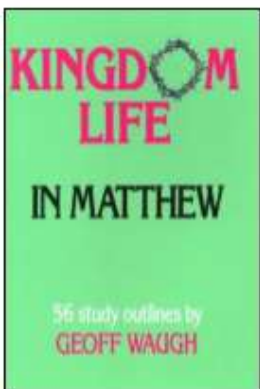
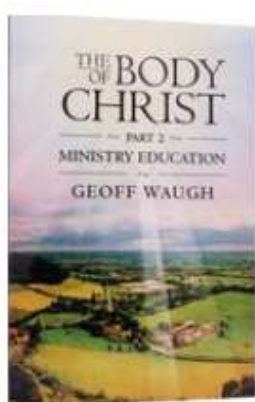
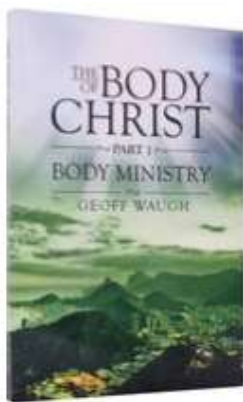
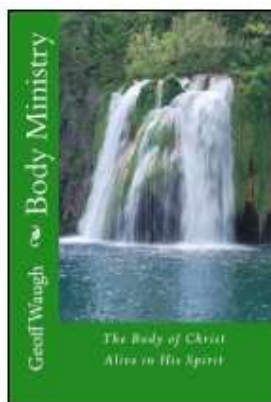
[Renewal Journal Publications](#)



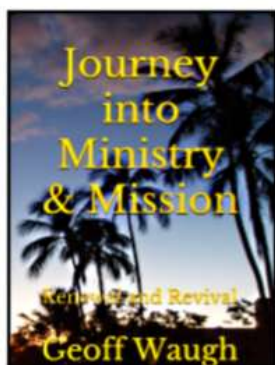
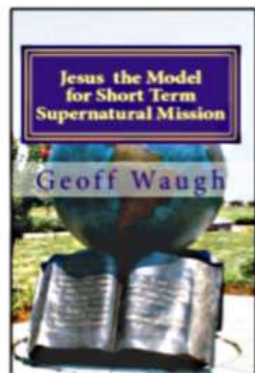
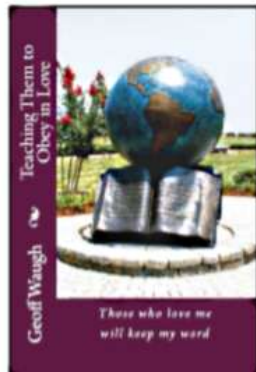
[Renewal Journal Publications](#)



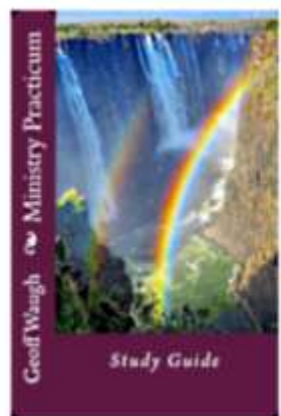
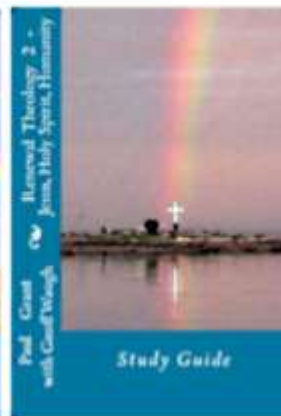
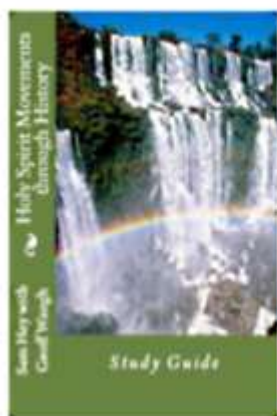
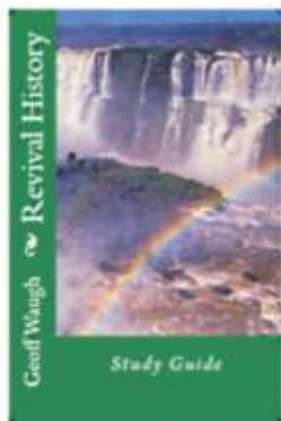
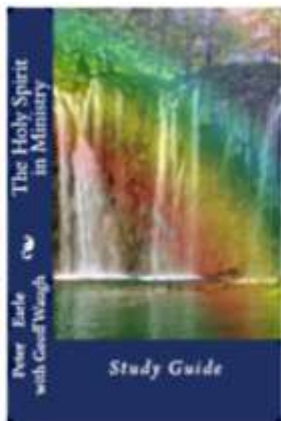
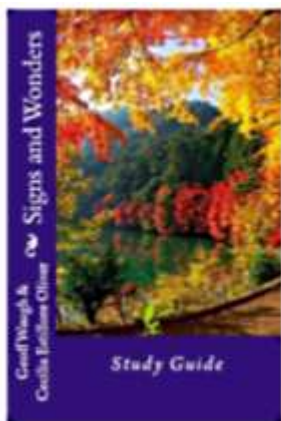
[Renewal Journal Publications](#)



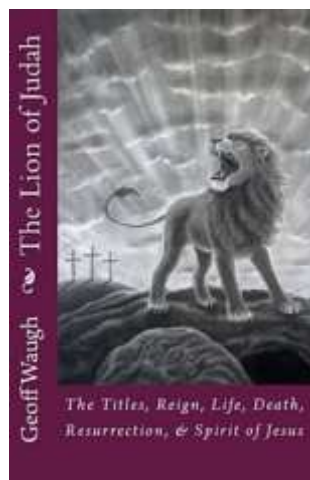
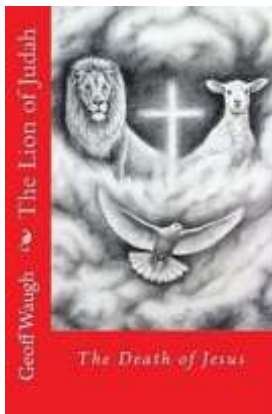
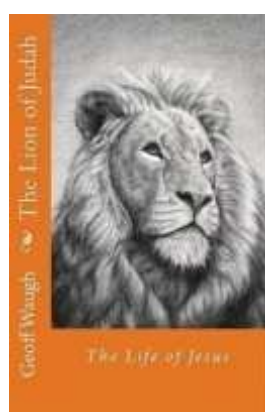
[Renewal Journal Publications](#)



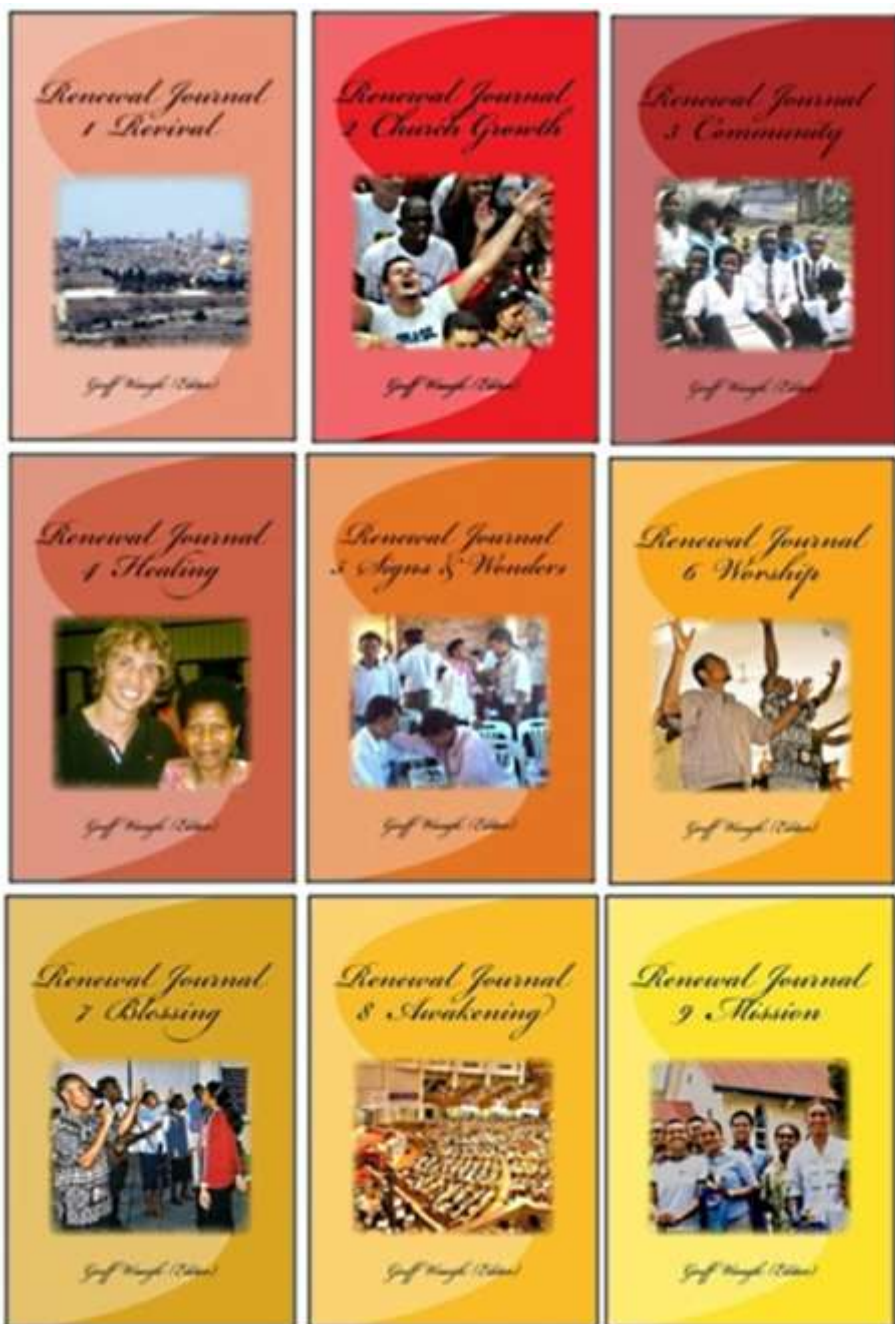
[Renewal Journal Publications](#)



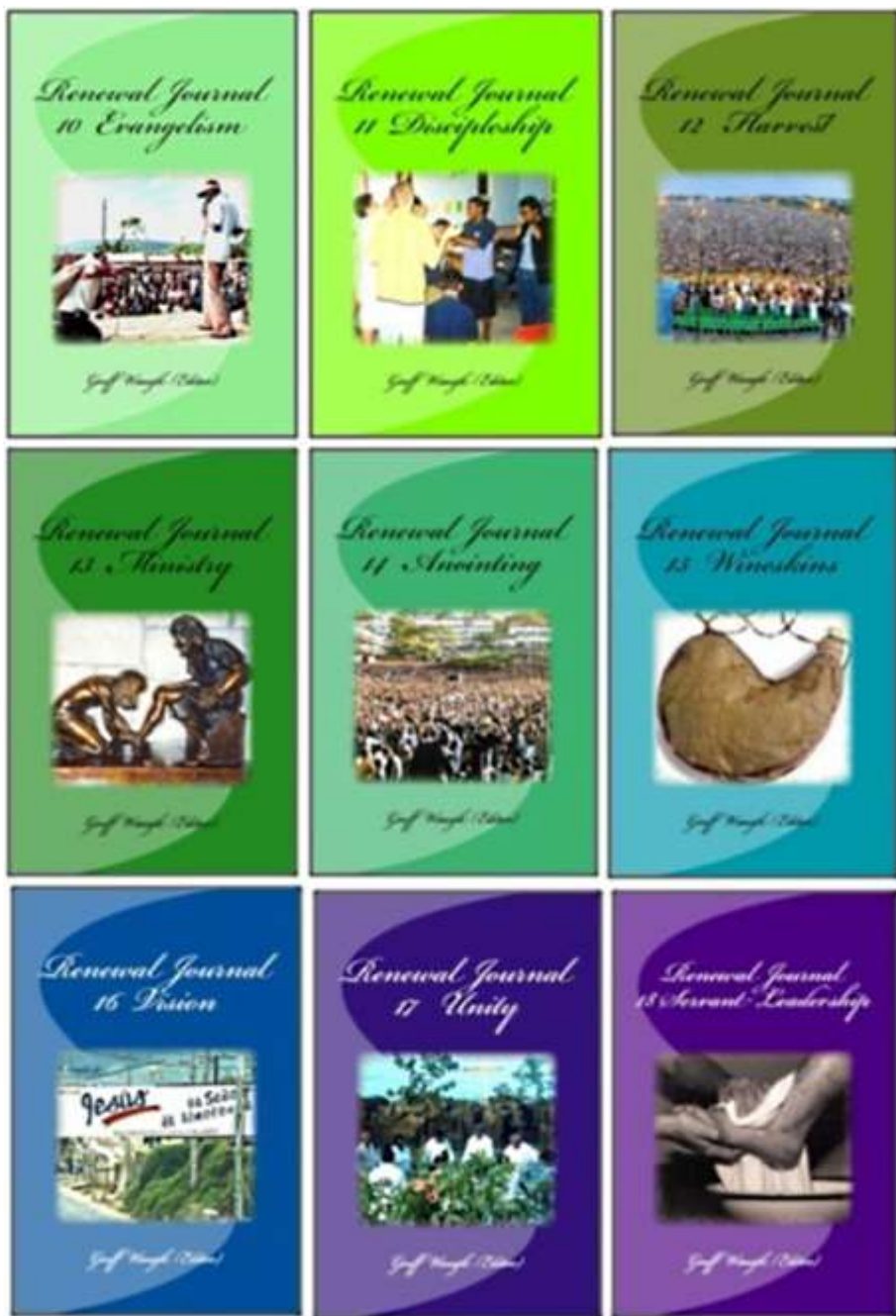
[Study Guides](#)



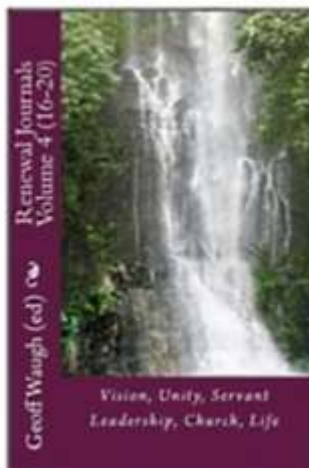
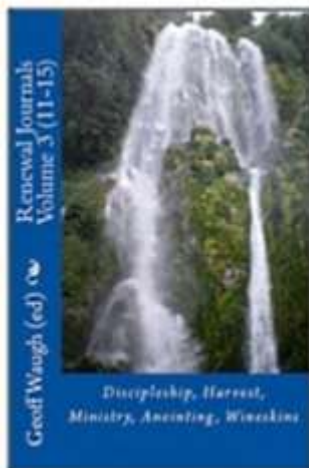
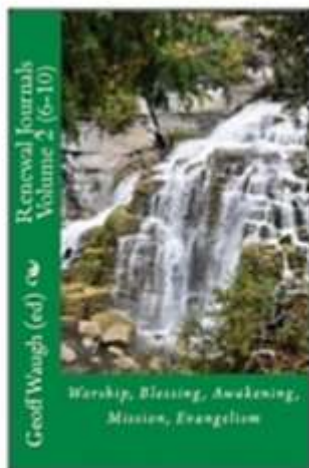
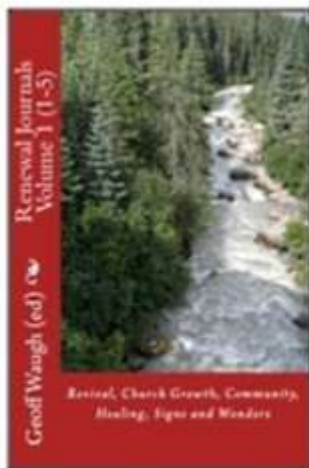
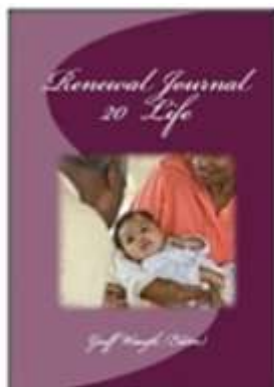
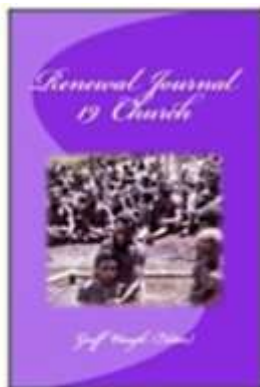
[The Lion of Judah Series](#)

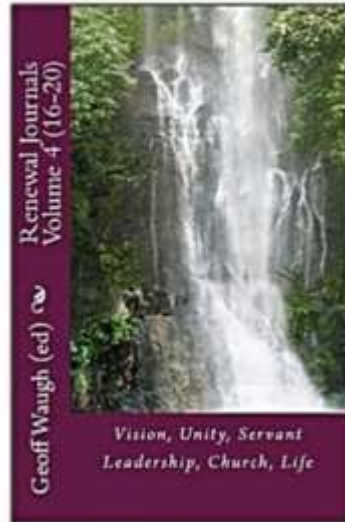
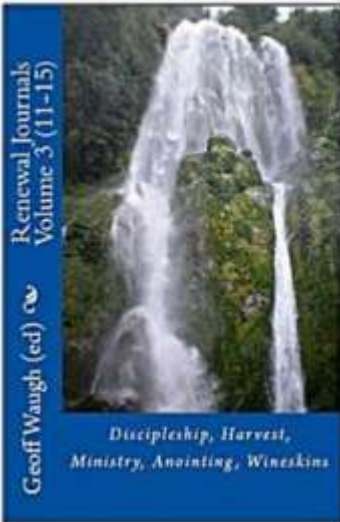
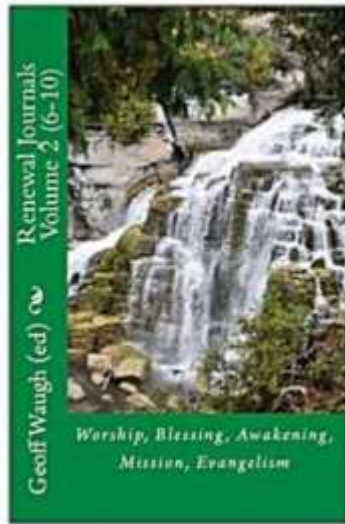
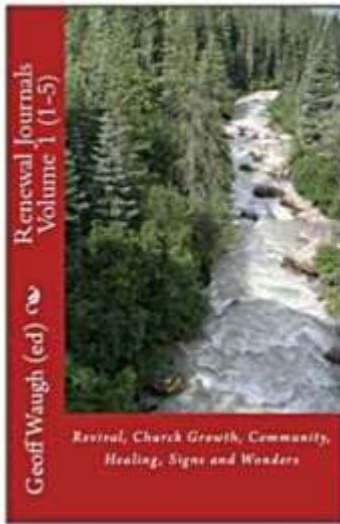


[Renewal Journals](#)



[Renewal Journals](#)

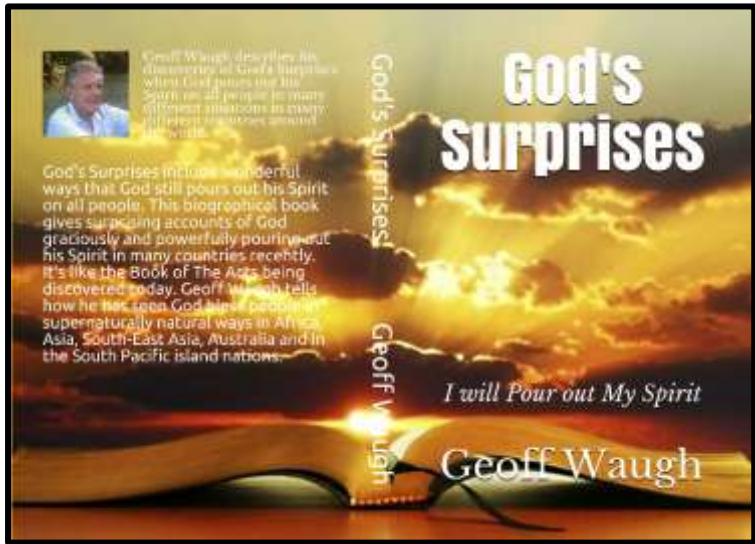




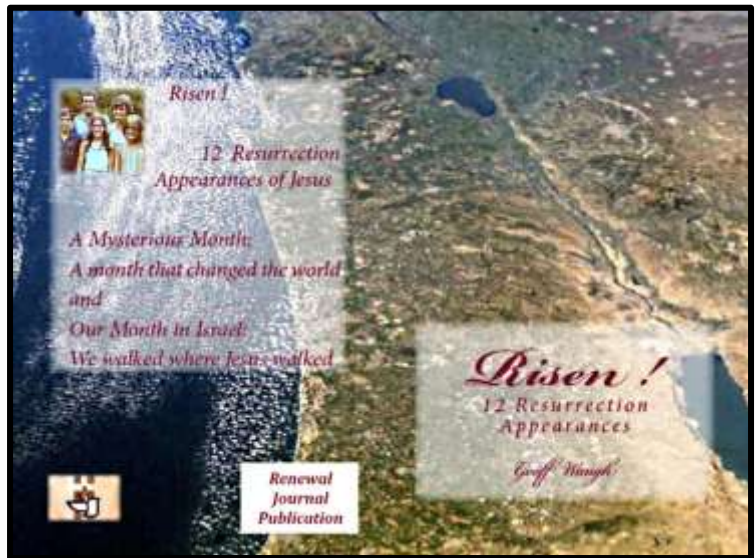
[Renewal Journals](#)

[20 issues in 4 bound volumes](#)

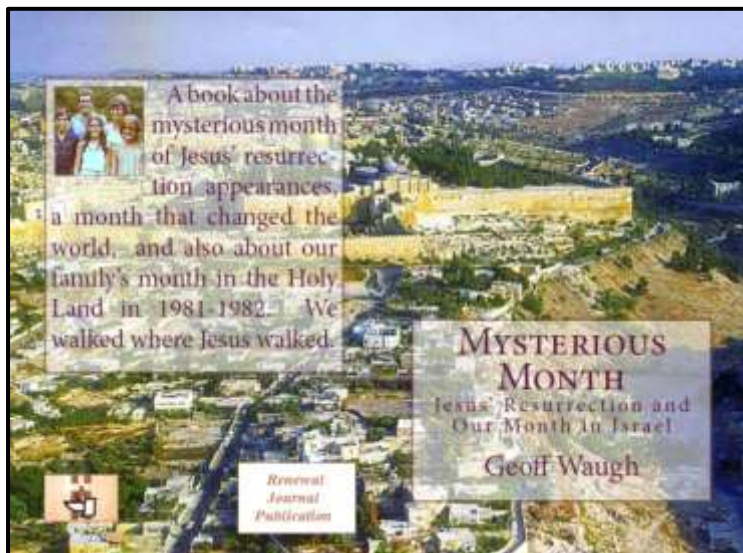
Double Page Book Covers



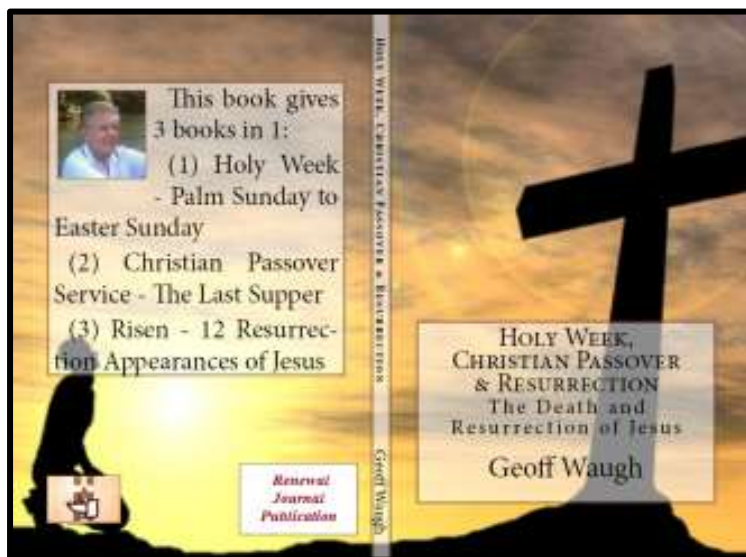
[God's Surprises](#)



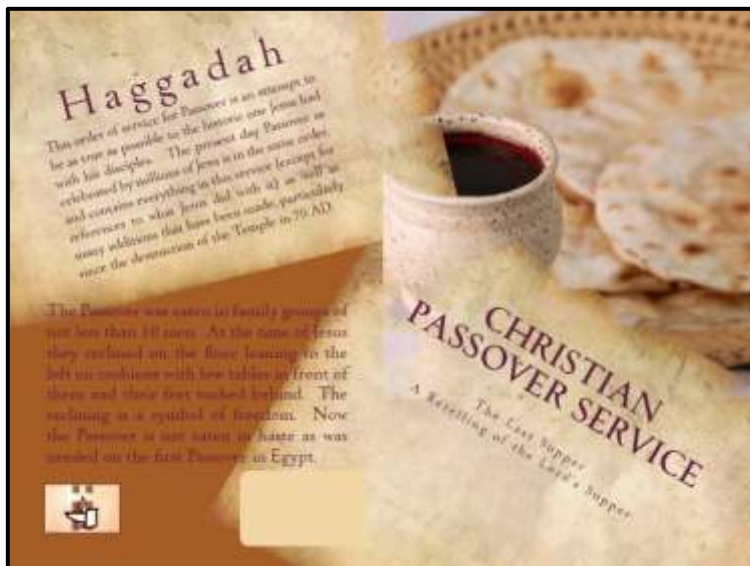
[Risen!](#)



[Mysterious Month](#)



[Holy Week, Christian Passover & Resurrection](#)

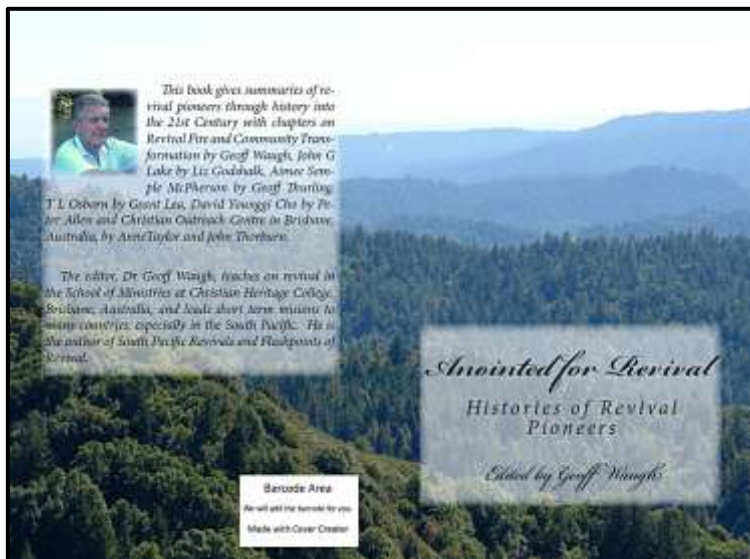


[Christian Passover Service](#)

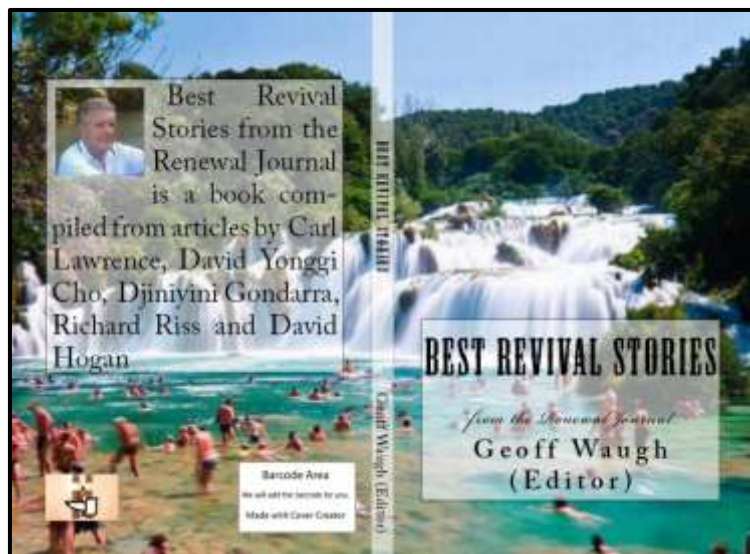
A Retelling of the Lord's Supper



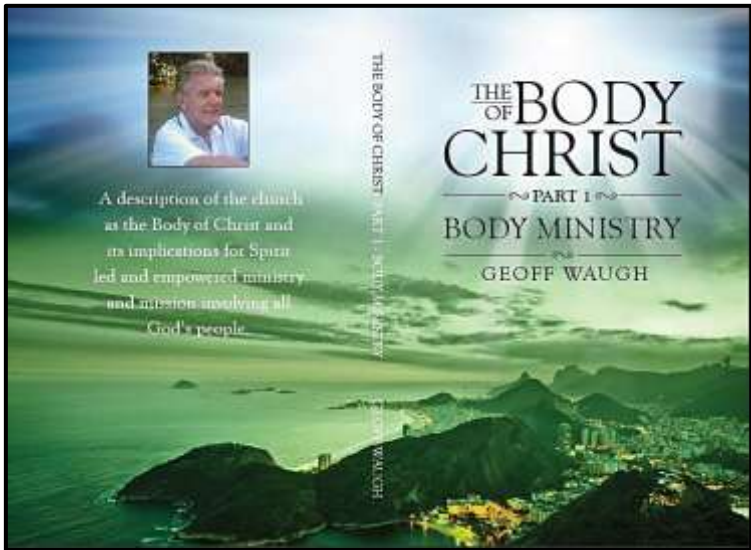
[The Christmas Message](#)



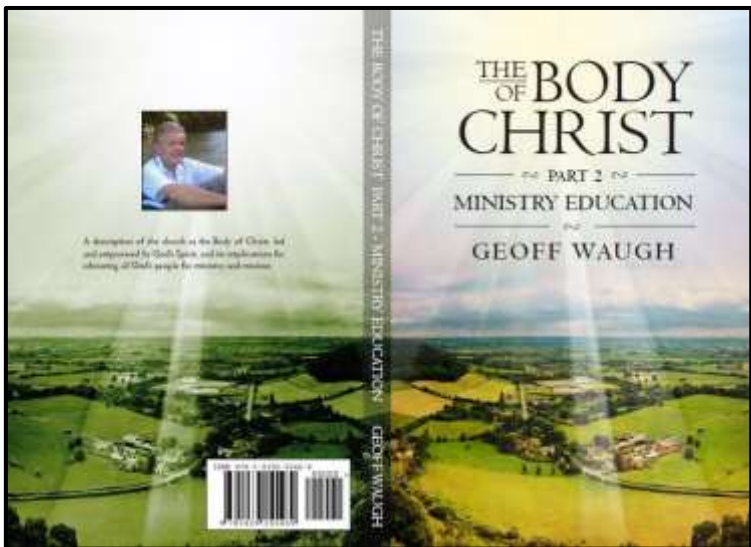
[Anointed for Revival](#)



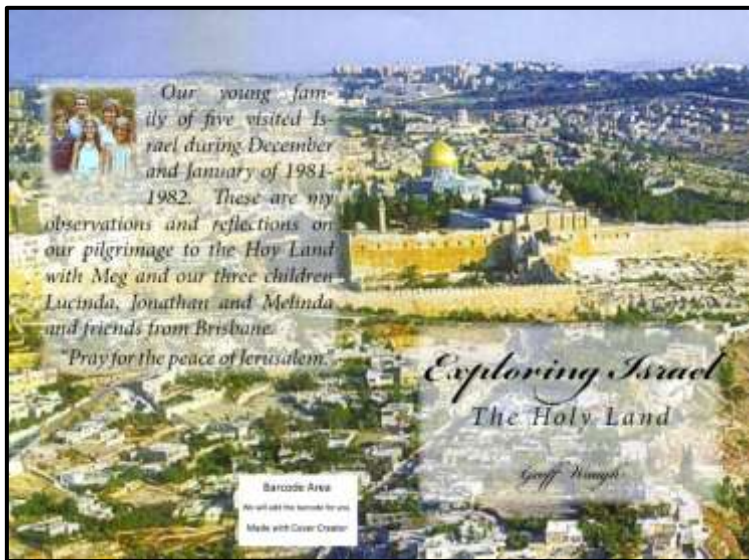
[Best Revival Stories](#)



The Body of Christ, Part 1: Body Ministry



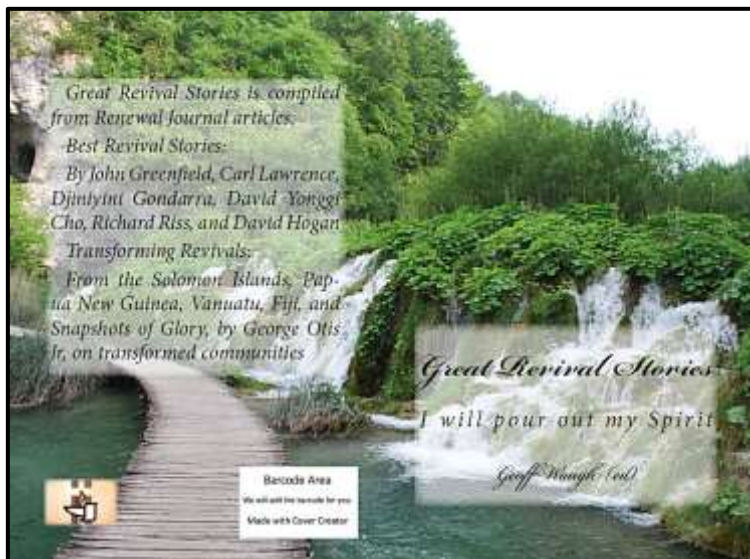
The Body of Christ, Part 2: Ministry Education



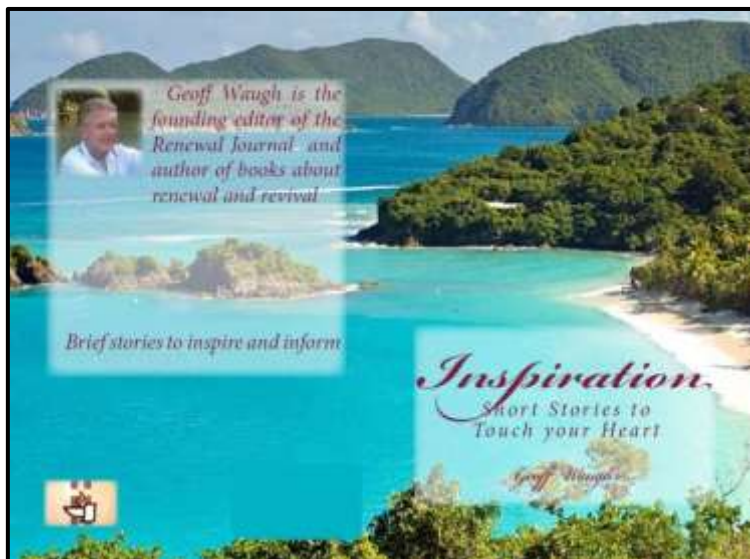
[Exploring Israel \(colour\)](#)



[Exploring Israel \(black & white\)](#)



[Great Revival Stories](#)



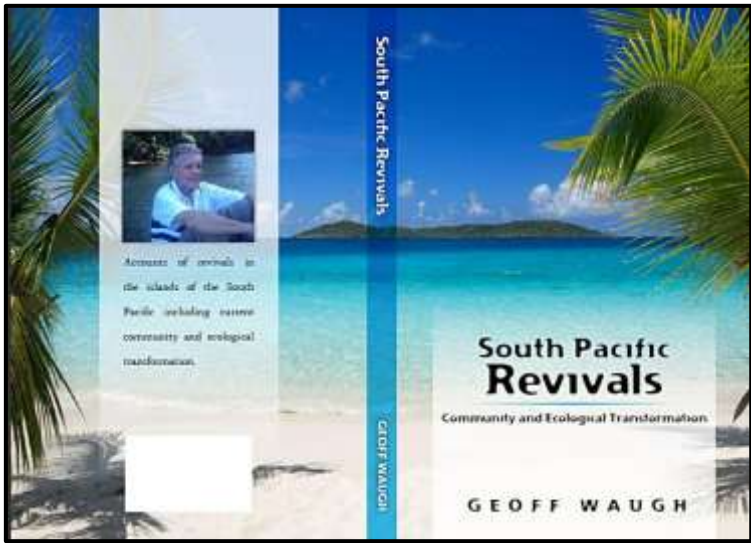
[Inspiration](#)



[Renewal: I make all things new](#)



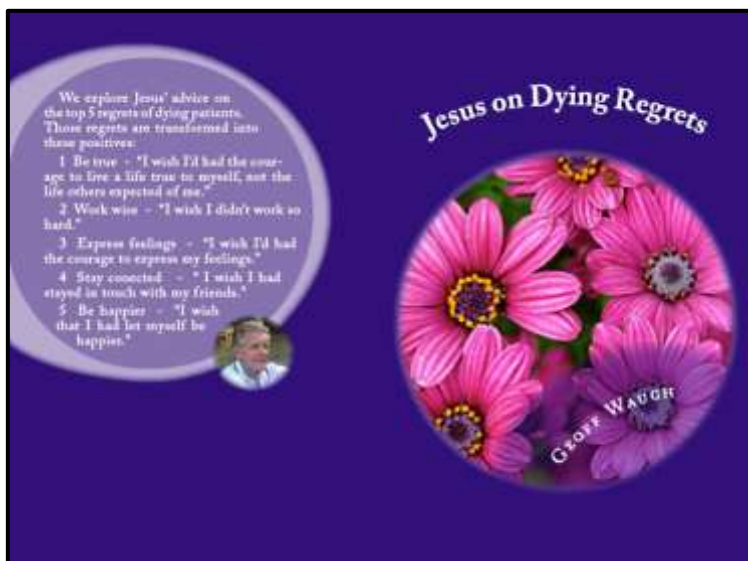
[Revival: I will pour out my Spirit](#)



South Pacific Revivals



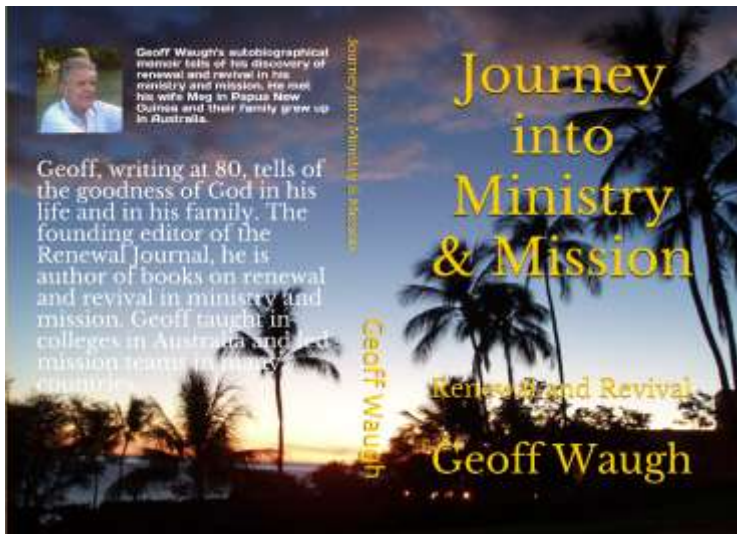
Transforming Revivals



[*Jesus on Dying Regrets*](#)



[*Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal & Revival*](#)

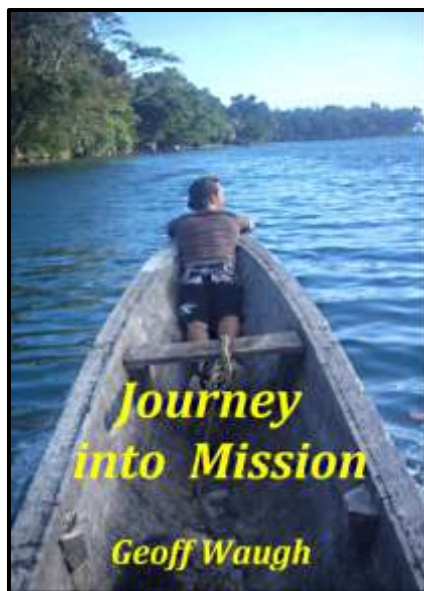


Journey into Ministry and Mission

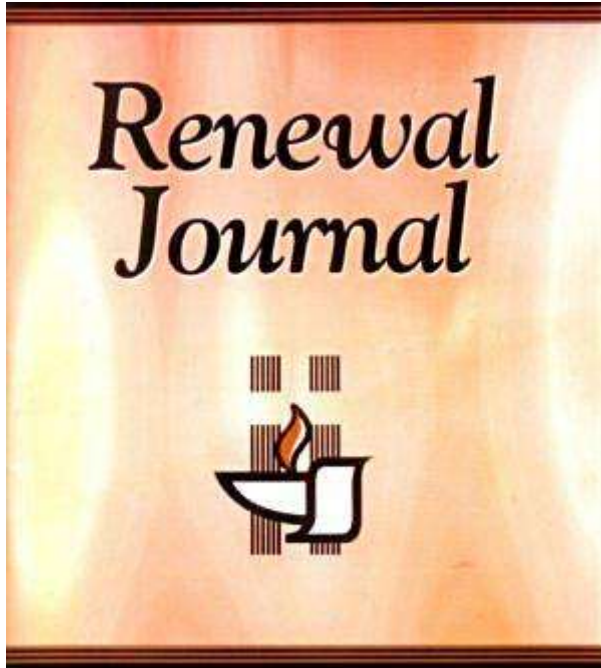
Condensed from two biographical books:

Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal & Revival

& Journey into Mission



[Renewal Journal](#)



www.renewaljournal.com

The Renewal Journal gives links to

Renewal Journals

Books (including PDFs)

Blogs

FREE SUBSCRIPTION: for new Blogs & free offers
Free subscription gives you updates for
new Blogs and free offers
including free eBooks

PDF Books available

renewaljournal.com

All books both Paperback and eBook

Most Paperbacks in both

Basic Edition and

Gift Edition (colour)

I need and appreciate
your positive review comments
on Amazon and Kindle