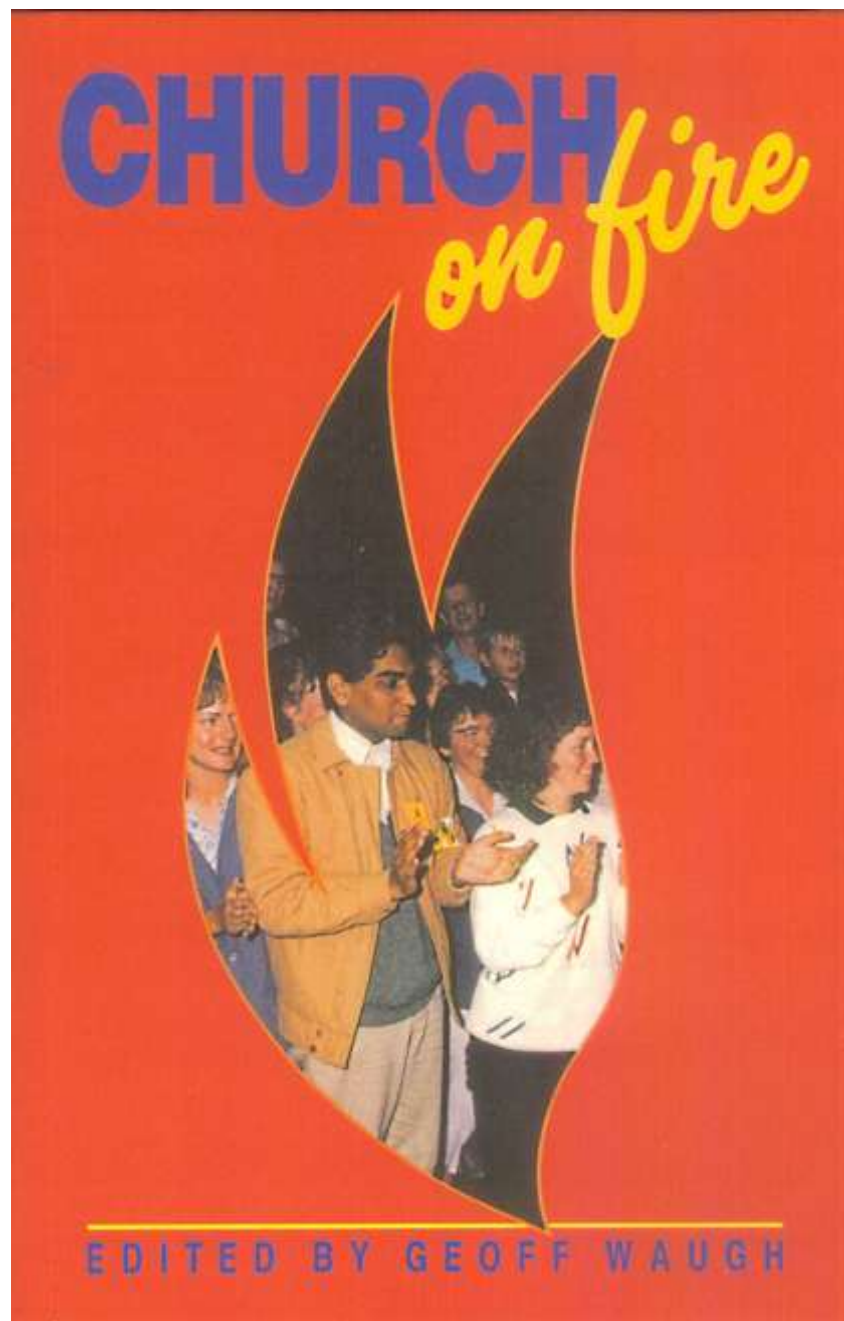


CHURCH ON FIRE

Australian Comment on
Renewal and Revival



Edited by Geoff Waugh

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

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Introduction: Renewal

Renewal in the church challenges everyone.

Renewal comes from God's action. If the Lord is renewing the church we need to take notice. That will affect us all. We change. We're all surprised.

One surprise is that renewal is not a side issue, not an optional extra, not peripheral. It is essential. The victory of the cross over evil in our lives and in society can only be known in the power of the Spirit of Jesus.

Jesus Christ is Lord. He is head of the church and Lord of all. He moves among us in his Spirit, the Holy Spirit. 'God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts' and 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us' (Galatians 4:6; Romans 5:5).

Personal Renewal

The Holy Spirit touches us deeply. We have difficulty in trying to express the inexpressible! Scripture describes the impact of the Spirit in many ways:

- * The Spirit was given - John 7:39; Romans 5:5;
- * The Spirit was sent - Luke 24:49; John 15:26; 16:7; Galatians 4:6;
- * The Spirit put on - Numbers 11:17, 25; Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 12:18;
- * The Spirit rested upon - Numbers 11:25,25; 1 Peter 4:14;
- * The Spirit came upon - Judges 3:10; Acts 8:16; 19:6;
- * The Spirit took control (came upon) - Judges 6:34; 1 Samuel 11:6; 16:13;
- * The Spirit descended (came down) - Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22; John 1:33;
- * The Spirit fell (came down) - Acts 10:44; 11:15;
- * The Spirit poured out - Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18; 10:45;
- * The Spirit received - John 7:39; Acts 8:15-17; 10:47; 19:2;
- * The Spirit remained - John 1:32-33;
- * Baptised in or with the Spirit - Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5;
- * Filled with the Spirit - Acts 2:4; 9:17; Ephesians 5:18.

These scriptures, taken together, indicate that to be baptised in the Holy Spirit involves both incorporation into the Body of Christ and empowering of the Body of Christ for mission.

To be filled with the Spirit includes an initial impact, release of, or baptism in the Spirit (Acts 2:4; 9:17) and specific encounters with or anointings by the Spirit (Acts 4:8, 31) and the on-going Spirit-filled life (Ephesians 5:18).

We now live in a time when millions of people are rediscovering this deep encounter with God's Spirit.

Corporate renewal

All these encounters with the Spirit of God are linked in scripture with God's loving and powerful work among his people and in the world. We are

to serve and minister in the power of the Spirit (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 1:5-8).

Divine love embraces us. As we respond, we change. We begin to yield to the strong claims of God's love on us. The church is commanded to be the most loving, caring, healing, forgiving, serving community on earth. That's disturbing because we are not very good at it. It's tough. We have a lot of repenting to do. We need to forgive and love one another, not attack each other.

Our Lord only recognises one church. His! We see it from our perspectives, not from God's. Most of us think our branch is the best, the truest to the Bible, the most authentic. That's why we are committed to that branch, of course.

Yet this very commitment can mean that we view others as inferior, not so spiritually perceptive as us, nor so intellectually honest, nor so pastorally sensitive, nor so ecclesiastically comprehensive.

Strange isn't it? At best, we see only blurred reflections, as in a bronze mirror (1 Corinthians 13:12). So we need to be humble about our ideas. All of our structures and organisations are riddled with human sin, as well as touched by God's grace in our lives.

Unity is not found in structure or doctrine. Look at your own denomination or congregation to see that! We can have the same structure or doctrine but be divided in many ways.

All structures, including church ones, fall prey to sin: our pride, ambition, power plays, status seeking, political manoeuvring - all the things Jesus challenged. Jesus confronts our constant abuse of structures, in the church and in the world. He calls us to servant leadership, to his justice and righteousness, to lay down our lives for one another in love.

Similarly, all doctrines, including church ones, fall prey to sin: our blinkered vision, legalistic interpretation, limited understanding, thinking one facet is the whole truth or one slice is the whole pie. Our angry debates so easily wound and divide the body of Christ. The more dogmatically we insist that our doctrine is the right one, the more we wound our Lord as we cut up his body.

On the other hand, through the presence of God's Spirit in us, the more we work for compassionate and just structures and the more we hold our doctrinal convictions with humility and grace, the more we discover unity in Jesus our Lord.

We need the Spirit's power to enable us to be more like Jesus. He turns everything around. The first are last, and the last first. Status and privilege count for nothing, and are hindrances. The loving, caring servants are great in the kingdom. You have to lose your life to find it. When we surrender to God, we win. Love triumphs.

When God pours out his Spirit upon us, we begin to discover the miracle of unity in the Spirit. God's love softens and melts our hard hearts. We really are one in Christ. We share his life, even though we see things from different perspectives.

That divine life overwhelms us and disturbs us!

Rethinking renewal

Renewal always disturbs us. Along comes this creative power transforming lives all over the place. If it doesn't fit our mould (and it doesn't) we can be upset.

The wind blows where it will. We hear the sound of it and we see the effects of this wind of the Spirit in people born anew of the Spirit (John 3:8). We are confronted again with God's action and our reaction. It's all so unpredictable!

Our human reaction is often a problem. It may vary from the extremes of disbelief and entrenched resistance to gullible cultish excesses.

There have been excesses. This happens in all traditions, especially where emotions are touched deeply. We can exaggerate, be bigoted, and fall prey to the pride which thinks we alone are right and others are wrong.

There are, however, gracious, warm hearted, generous people in all traditions who truly love God and love others. They have the humility to learn from others. They enrich others through their faith.

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble - in any tradition. We can respond to God's action in faith, hope and love.

Then we will be agents of reconciliation. Scripture is full of instructions to love: 'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all' (Romans 12:14-18).

That's the way to go. 'Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts' (1 Corinthians 14:1). Those spiritual gifts need to be expressed in love.

Controversial renewal

However, God's action can be very unsettling. God's Spirit is described as wind and fire. He sets the church on fire. That is not always welcomed.

The Spirit came upon Jesus and immediately he faced opposition. He was severely tempted straight after his baptism. Then he was kicked out of his home synagogue. Yet he went on in the power of the Spirit helping and changing people because of his great compassion.

The Spirit came upon the early church and immediately it faced opposition. Conversions and healings followed Pentecost. So did strife. The risen Lord was busy in his church in the power of his Spirit still helping and changing people.

Even Christians faced opposition from within the church when the Spirit moved powerfully among them. Peter was criticised for going to Cornelius. Paul was opposed by Jewish Christians who wanted the scriptures obeyed in every detail. Always the Spirit calls us on into

deeper union with our Lord in his mission in the world. God's Spirit will not be confined to any of our traditions. That's disturbing.

The same sort of thing happened in church history. Our heroes are often those who were persecuted. It's safe for us to study events back there and then. Or is it?

Here and now it is not so safe. It can revolutionise our lives.

What do you do when you ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and you are? You are flooded with a dynamic new love for God and for others. As you read this book you can ask that, and expect it!

What do you do when someone lays hands on you so that the gifts of the Spirit will be more fully released in your life, and you discover it has happened to you as it did for Saul of Tarsus or the Ephesians (Acts 9:17; 19:6)?

What do you do when you are in a meeting where the Spirit comes upon everyone in majesty and mystery as happened in Jerusalem and Caesarea (Acts 2:1-14; 10:44-48)?

What do you do when the Spirit of Jesus leads you to identify with the poor and oppressed and to confront injustice as happened with the Spirit-filled ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus?

A young lady prays for a poor man with a withered arm who is instantly healed, and she gets such a shock she faints!

A young man speaks at his first crusade among oppressed people and hundreds are converted and healed. It caused such a stir that the international media covered the three day event.

Revival can flood into communities with such impact that thousands repent of wrong attitudes and actions, crime rates drop, abortions diminish, enemies are reconciled, stolen goods are returned, justice prevails. Yet not without opposition.

We live in such a time again.

Worldwide renewal

The Lord is renewing his church in many ways. Just as our branch of the vine is not the whole vine (and needs some pruning), so our branch of renewal is not the whole picture. God's Spirit cannot be limited to our little ideas or actions.

No one term or theology can grasp the mystery or explain it fully. That is the nature of mystery!

So with pentecostalism and charismatic renewal. Those terms emerged to put a handle on some of the mystery:

- * a rediscovery of the Spirit coming in intimacy and power as in Jesus' ministry;
- * a rediscovery of Pentecost as in the Book of Acts; and
- * a rediscovery of the charisms or gifts of the Spirit as described in the epistles.

These rediscoveries are linked with a baptism or infilling or empowering in, with and by the Holy Spirit. Many different terms describe this powerful encounter.

God's power was present in Jesus, in the disciples, and in the early church. It is described in many ways.

Recently, millions have discovered this intimate and powerful encounter with God in different ways with different testimonies explained in different terms.

David Barrett, editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, reports that the number of known pentecostal/charismatic Christians were 100 million by 1980, 150 million by 1985, 337 million by 1989, and over 360 million in 1990. At the beginning of the nineties they were one-fifth of all Christians, one-fourth of the full-time workers, responsible for half of all conversions to Christ, and had the world's largest churches.

Henry Van Dusen, former president of Union Theological Seminary, had concluded by 1960 that the pentecostal movement with its emphasis upon the Holy Spirit was more than just another revival. He described it as a revolution in our day, a revolution comparable in importance with the establishment of the original Apostolic Church and with the Protestant Reformation. He called it the third force in Christendom, alongside the Catholic and Protestant expressions of Christianity.

The last thirty years have seen that powerful dynamic spill over into all branches of the church. It is not limited to pentecostal or charismatic groups.

This book reflects on the phenomenon of pentecostal and charismatic renewal in many different traditions, expressed in various theologies.

What is God doing in the world at this crucial time in history? What is Jesus Christ the head of his church doing among us? What is the Holy Spirit saying to us?

There are no easy answers. We see only a small part of the picture. Our observations and conclusions must be tentative and limited. God is much bigger than our understanding of renewal in the church.

Nevertheless, we do have the biblical witness. Renewal of biblical Christianity will drive us into sacrificial service in the church and in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit transforming us.

Renewal is not for us to have nice meetings. Indeed, meeting together in the holy, majestic presence of God through the power of his Spirit, can be quite overwhelming or unnerving. When the Spirit of God comes upon people profound changes happen. It was so in the early church. They experienced awe and wonder (Acts 2:43; 4:31; 5:5, 11-16; 10:44-48; 13:12).

Those early Christians made an impact on their world in the power of the Spirit. Others throughout history have done the same. Now it's our turn.

This book offers some personal witness, case studies of renewed churches, and reflections or observations about this multi-faceted renewal from people who are involved and have been on the road a while. They have different perspectives, different theologies. Yet they all witness to

the wonderful and disturbing impact of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, in renewal.

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ABORIGINAL RENEWAL

Chapter 1 Pentecost in Arnhem Land

Djiniyini Gondarra

The Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra is a Uniting Church minister and former Moderator of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia. This chapter is adapted from his book 'Let my people go' published by the Bethel Presbytery of the Northern Synod.

This is a very brief outline of the revival which took place in Arnhem Land in the Uniting Church parishes, beginning in Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, 400 miles east of Darwin, with a population of 1500 to 1600.

In the early years, Galiwin'ku Community was the mission station established by the Methodist Overseas Mission back in 1942 under the leadership of Rev. Harold Shepherdson. He was accepted by the Methodist Mission Board in 1927 as a lay missionary, engineer and sawmiller. Because of his long outstanding Christian leadership and humility he was ordained at Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, on 19th October, 1954. He and his wife Ella Shepherdson would have been the last pioneer missionaries to leave their beloved home and people in Arnhem Land.

The missionary movement in Arnhem Land has taken as its mandate the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 which says: 'Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.'

I understand that mission is to include every aspect of the work which the church is sent into the world to do, and I understand evangelism in a different sense which is called holistic evangelism. It is a means of communication of the good news about Jesus Christ as it affects the whole of life.

You will remember very well the story in Acts 1:6-8 when Jesus and his disciples met together before the ascension took place. The disciples asked whether God's reign was now come in full. Jesus told them it was not their business to worry about that, but they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them and they would be his witnesses beginning in Jerusalem and going outwards into Judea, Samaria and on to the ends of the earth.

There is something quite unpredictable, unexpected and mysterious about the way that God's rule is realized in communities and in the lives of individuals. So the disciples were told to wait for the Holy Spirit and then they would be witnesses when Pentecost came. Something quite

unplanned and unexpected happened. They began to babble in other strange languages and people asked what is this that is happening? What is going on?

Difficult times

Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, experienced the revival on 14th March, 1979. That year was a very hard year because the churches in Arnhem Land were going through very difficult times. There was suffering, hardship and even persecution.

Many people left the church and the Christian gospel no longer had interest and value in their lives. Many began to speak against Christianity or even wanted to get rid of the church.

This attitude was affected by the changes that were happening. Money and other things were coming into the community from the government. The people became more rich and were handling lots of things such as motor cars, T.V., motor boats, and good houses. The responsibilities were in the hands of the aboriginal people and no longer in the missionaries' hands.

The earthly values became the centre of aboriginal life. There was more liquor coming into the communities every day, and more fighting was going on. There were more families hurt, and more deaths and incidents happening which were caused by drinking.

Whole communities in Arnhem Land were in great chaos. The people were in confusion and without direction. The aboriginal people were listening to many voices. The government was saying you are free people and you must have everything you want, just like the other Australians. And there were promises from one to another.

To me, the aboriginal people in Arnhem Land were like the Israelites in Egypt being slaves in bondage because of all the changes that were brought into the community. They were like the vacuum suction which was sucking in everything that comes without knowing that many of the things that came into communities were really unpleasant and only destroyed the harmony and the good relationship with the people and the communities.

I thank God that I was being called back to serve my own people in Arnhem Land, especially to Galiwin'ku. In 1975 I had just completed my theological training in Papua New Guinea in Raronga Theological College and was appointed to Galiwin'ku parish. My ordination took place in 1976 in Galiwin'ku parish, and I was ordained by the Arnhem Land Presbytery. I was appointed then to Galiwin'ku parish as parish minister.

This celebration took place when there were lots of changes happening and when the church was challenged by the power of evil which clothes itself in greed, selfishness, drunkenness, and in wealth. As I went on my daily pastoral visitation around the camp I would hear the drunks swearing and bashing up their wives and throwing stones on the houses, and glass being broken in the houses. And sometimes the drunks would go into the church and smoke cigarettes in the holy house of God. This was really terrible. The whole of Arnhem Land was being held by the hands of satan.

I remember one day I woke up early in the morning and went for a walk down the beach and started talking to myself. I said, 'Lord, why have

you called me to the ministry? Why have you called me back to my own people? Why not to somewhere else, because there is so much suffering and hardship?'

I then returned to the manse where Gelung, my wife, and the children were. This was our last day before we left for our holidays in the south, visiting old missionary friends and also taking part in the lovely wedding held in Sydney for Barry and Barbara Bullick, one of our missionary workers still remaining in Galiwin'ku Community.

It was almost 6.30 a.m. and it was my turn to lead the morning devotions. The bell had already rung and I had rushed into the church. When I got there, there were only four people inside the church. We used to have our morning devotions every day early in the morning because this system had been formed by the missionaries in the early years.

God had given me the Word to read and share with those four people who were present in the church with me. The reading I selected was from the Old Testament, Ezekiel 37:1-14, the valley of dry bones. Most of you know the story very well, how God Yahweh commanded the prophet Ezekiel to prophecy to the dry bones, and how that the dry bones represent the whole house of Israel, how they were just like bones dried up and their hope had perished. They were completely cut off.

After the morning prayers, Gelung, the children and I were ready to leave for Gove and then go on to Cairns in North Queensland. We were away for four weeks and returned on 14th March, 1979.

20th century Pentecost

To me and all the Galiwin'ku Community, both the aboriginal Christians and the white Christians, these dates and the month were very important because this is the mark of the birth of the Pentecost experience in the Arnhem Land churches or the birth of the Arnhem Land churches. To us it was like Pentecost in this 20th Century.

It happened when Gelung, the children and I arrived very late in the afternoon from our holidays through Gove on the late Missionary Aviation Fellowship aircraft to Galiwin'ku. When we landed at Galiwin'kyu airport we were welcomed and met by many crowds of people.

They all seemed to be saying to us, 'We would like you to start the Bible Class fellowship once again.' It seemed to me that God, after our leaving, had been walking on and preparing many people's lives to wait upon the outpouring of his Holy Spirit that would soon come upon them.

Gelung and I were so tired from the long trip from Cairns to Gove and then from Gove to Galiwin'ku that we expected to rest and sort out some of the things and unpack. But we just committed ourselves to the needs of our brothers and sisters who had welcomed and met us at the airport that afternoon.

After the evening dinner, we called our friends to come and join us in the Bible Class meeting. We just sang some hymns and choruses translated into Gupapuynu and into Djambarrpuynu. There were only seven or eight people who were involved or came to the Bible Class meeting, and many of our friends didn't turn up. We didn't get worried about it.

I began to talk to them that this was God's will for us to get together this evening because God had planned this meeting through them so that we will see something of his great love which will be poured out on each one of them. I said a word of thanks to those few faithful Christians who had been praying for renewal in our church, and I shared with them that I too had been praying for the revival or the renewal for this church and for the whole of Arnhem Land churches, because to our heavenly Father everything is possible. He can do mighty things in our churches throughout our great land.

These were some of the words of challenge I gave to those of my beloved brothers and sisters. Gelung, my wife, also shared something of her experience of the power and miracles that she felt deep down in her heart when she was about to die in Darwin Hospital delivering our fourth child. It was God's power that brought the healing and the wholeness in her body

I then asked the group to hold each other's hands and I began to pray for the people and for the church, that God would pour out his Holy Spirit to bring healing and renewal to the hearts of men and women, and to the children.

Suddenly we began to feel God's Spirit moving in our hearts and the whole form of our prayer suddenly changed and everybody began to pray in the Spirit and in harmony. And there was a great noise going on in the room and we began to ask one another what was going on.

Some of us said that God had now visited us and once again established his kingdom among his people who have been bound for so long by the power of evil. Now the Lord is setting his church free and bringing us into the freedom of happiness and into reconciliation and to restoration.

In that same evening the word just spread like the flames of fire and reached the whole community in Galiwin'ku. Gelung and I couldn't sleep at all that night because people were just coming for the ministry, bringing the sick to be prayed for, for healing. Others came to bring their problems. Even a husband and wife came to bring their marriage problem, so the Lord touched them and healed their marriage.

Next morning the Galiwin'ku Community once again became the new community. The love of Jesus was being shared and many expressions of forgiveness were taking place in the families and in the tribes. Wherever I went I could hear people singing and humming Christian choruses and hymns! Before then I would have expected to hear only fighting and swearing and many other troublesome things that would hurt your feelings and make you feel sad.

Many unplanned and unexpected things happened every time we went from camp to camp to meet with the people. The fellowship was held every night and more and more people gave their lives to Christ, and it went on and on until sometimes the fellowship meeting would end around about midnight. There was more singing, testimony, and ministry going on. People did not feel tired in the morning, but still went to work. Many Christians were beginning to discover what their ministry was, and a few others had a strong sense of call to be trained to become Ministers of the Word. Now today these ministers who have done their training through Nungilinya College have been ordained. These are some of the results of the revival in Arnhem Land. Many others have been trained to take up a special ministry in the parish.

The spirit of revival has not only affected the Uniting Church communities and the parishes, but Anglican churches in Arnhem Land as

well, such as in Angurugu, Umbakumba, Roper River, Numbulwar and Oenpelli. These all have experienced the revival, and have been touched by the joy and the happiness and the love of Christ.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Arnhem Land has swept further to the Centre in Pitjantjatjara and across the west into many aboriginal settlements and communities. I remember when Rev. Rronang Garrawurra, Gelung and I were invited by the Warburton Ranges people and how we saw God's Spirit move in the lives of many people. Five hundred people came to the Lord and were baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

There was a great revival that swept further west. I would describe these experiences like a wild bush fire burning from one side of Australia to the other side of our great land. The experience of revival in Arnhem Land is still active in many of our aboriginal parishes and the churches.

We would like to share these experiences in many white churches where doors are closed to the power of the Holy Spirit. It has always been my humble prayer that the whole of Australian Christians, both black and white, will one day be touched by this great and mighty power of the living God.

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Chapter 2

Fire of God among Aborigines

John Blacket

The Rev. John Blacket is a Uniting Church minister. He and his wife are Directors of Khesed Ministries, a cross-cultural ministry with Australia's Aborigines.

Soon after the arrival of the first European settlers in Australia some Christians started to take the gospel to Aborigines. Much of this early work was thwarted by aboriginal repulsion at the life style and cruelty of these strange new people.

Not that all Aborigines rejected foreigners. There had been contact with Macassans from Indonesia every year for hundreds of years. They came to gather trepang, a sea delicacy found in North Australia. Some Aborigines visited Indonesia with them, and the cultures and even families mixed together.

No, the clash between Europeans and Aborigines was a deep cultural issue of differing world views related to what is important in each culture. Europeans did not value highly the same things Aborigines did, especially family relationships. They seemed more interested in material things.

These Europeans spoke about God and his love. They tried to teach the 'inferior, primitive' Aborigines by rational, cerebral processes. Aborigines, however, 'know' things by a heart experience rather than abstractly in their minds. So Europeans tended to see mission as a very long process of teaching abstract Western concepts.

There was some success. This came mainly from the love and commitment of these Christian foreigners to total strangers at incredible personal sacrifice. That spoke more than words.

Ron Williams, an aboriginal evangelist, observed that those Christians were the kind of heroes the children ought to know about, people not ashamed to shed tears and love their black friends, pioneers who poured out love and healed the wounds of many sorrowing, suffering and dying Aborigines.

Aborigines were searching for something in this new teaching to catch hold of, but it didn't seem to have any spiritual handles for them. It seemed to be ideas without answers to the struggles of life. Their world was full of very real spiritual powers, especially evil spirits and the power of 'magic men'. If this God was like they said, he should be stronger than the evil spirits, and they would see evidence of this. They didn't.

To the European, this world view was primitive superstition and was wrong. People just had to learn with their minds. Then they would understand. Even missionaries who did believe in satan and evil spirits did not seem to have the ability and power to deal with them.

Yet through it all God was at work. Seeds were sown which paved the way for the aboriginal revival.

Aborigines began finding a real relationship between their culture and the gospel. They rejected aspects of their culture which conflicted with God's Word but came to see that their 'law' was like the Jewish law which Jesus came to fulfil, not destroy. They sensed that God had given Aborigines some revelation of his divine nature and purpose in their culture that needed to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Makarrwala (Harry) from Buckingham Bay in eastern Arnhem Land, North Australia was one. An early convert in the region, he committed his life to Christ at Milingimbi in 1940. His conversion resulted from God speaking to him in a dream, a way in which God speaks to many Aborigines still. That led to the beginnings of indigenous changes, submitting the culture to the gospel, not through missionary teaching but through personal conviction by the Holy Spirit.

God prepared the way for revival, in people like Harry, in visions and dreams, in personal sacrifices and teaching, in signs and wonders, in healings and struggles, in personal relationships, and in meetings where God's power was clearly evident and many lives were changed.

Arnhem Land revival

It was not until 1979 at Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island) that a really powerful community-changing move of the Holy Spirit occurred. It seems that most of the revival among aboriginal people has stemmed from this in some way.

Arnhem Land, the north east section of the Northern Territory, is an aboriginal reserve, so over 90% of the residents are Aborigines. The rest are called 'balanda' (non-aboriginal) who work in the region to assist the aboriginal communities. Galiwin'ku is one of the largest communities with over 1,000 people.

The Methodist Church (which became part of the Uniting Church in 1977) pioneered missionary work in this region in 1923. Rev. Harold and Ella Shepherdson worked at Galiwin'ku from 1942, spending 35 years there and 50 years altogether in the region. This gave Galiwin'ku great stability through their incredible practical wisdom.

The church and tribal elders carefully trained key young local Aborigines for leadership. Rurrumbu Dhurrkay, the assistant school principal and an evangelist was one. Another was Rev. Djiniyini Gondarra who was placed in charge of the local church in 1977. God was preparing him for a wider and important national apostolic task. For both of them, this involved preparation in spiritual dimensions of family life which neither balanda nor aboriginal training had given them.

Yet the Holy Spirit began to move visibly in the community at the time Djiniyini and a number of other leaders, who were all praying expectantly for this move of God, went on holidays.

The first evidence of this special move of the Holy Spirit came with the wet season of 1978-79. People started to ask about God. At a social gathering on the beach Christians sensed God's presence in a unity they had never before experienced. Only one or two balanda were present. People wanted to spend more time together, and with God. Many fellowship meetings began to happen spontaneously, every night and at other times.

The fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit started to be experienced in new ways. Non-Christians felt God's presence, came to join in, were convicted of sin and repented. Even some who were sceptical and opposed to what was happening were drawn to come and sit on the side-lines and mock, but were brought to repentance by God.

While Djiniyini was on holiday he prayed for God's leading about what should be planned for the church for 1979. He listed many things.

On the day of his return in March some people said they wanted a fellowship meeting at his house that night. Tired after his journey, his spirits fell. But it turned out to be an exceptional night. During the night people began crowding into the lounge room. Many of them were people he had never seen at church. They began telling what had been going on while their pastor had been away. As Djiniyini and his wife Gelung listened, tears filled their eyes. Everything on that list had already happened, or was beginning to happen.

A visit by the Rev. Dan Armstrong, a Uniting Church minister and evangelist, had previously been planned for May. He arrived with a small team and found a people prepared by God. The church had more than doubled that year already. The team discovered they had come on the crest of a wave of God's Spirit moving among the people.

Dan Armstrong tells the story of their visit to that revival.

'The first day when we arrived there was such a sense of expectation. It was tremendous. We had a feast the first night, not a meeting. About 500 people arrived! They were gathered around the area, sitting at their little fires. Someone just started strumming a guitar. Others joined in and a few people started to sing.

'Then out of the darkness more people started to come. They knelt down all round the area. Some started to weep. I hadn't preached or anything at this point!

'We started to gather around and pray with them. The incredible thing was that the Lord just 'smote' them. But then they would get up and join with us in praying for others.

'There must have been fifty of them who came to Christ that night. Then the next day the word got out and the place was just jammed with people. We couldn't fit in the building where we started and had to move out into a big open area.

The beautiful thing was that the first morning the old men came first and started weeping. Others gathered around them day after day and night after night. We saw miracles. Several people were totally delivered from demonic power. Some were healed of all kinds of physical ailments. Particularly significant was the description that they gave again and again of a blanket of blackness being lifted and the light of Christ shining in.

One of the meetings was held on an old ceremonial ground. Through the worship and praise in that place that night the evil spiritual forces were at first aroused and then soundly defeated by the mighty power of God. Some dramatic manifestations were reported. This was another point of release for many people.

Each night after the team retired, others would remain singing and praying into the early hours of the morning. One night a country and

western group held a concert in the big hall near the space where they held their meetings. Only 40 attended the concert while over 500 attended the meeting. For Aborigines, that is a miracle!

Aboriginal teams

This revival took teams from Galiwin'ku throughout Arnhem Land, into Queensland, Western Australia, and even to Canberra. They visited aboriginal communities in remote places but included some balanda churches in cities. The results showed powerful evidence of God's ministry to receptive people. Mostly it was not as dramatic as at home, except for Warburton.

Warburton, with a population of 400, lies in the Central Desert area 250 kilometres west of the junction of the Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian borders.

The United Aborigines Mission has worked there for many years but it was hard going. Fighting, drunkenness and despair filled the town. In 1980, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs described it as the worst aboriginal community in Australia.

In September 1981, Rrurrumbu led a team from Galiwin'ku to Alice Springs, and the Pitjantjatara area south of Ayer's Rock, and finally to Warburton. They flew almost 3,000 kilometres, mainly by light aircraft, to conduct the meetings.

One man commented about Warburton: 'We knew things couldn't get worse, so God was our only hope.' There was real expectancy in spite of disruptions.

A group travelling to a men's tribal ceremony arrived in town at the same time as the mission team. They intended to take all the men with them on to the ceremony.

One of their truck drivers said, 'I want to stay and listen to what these strangers have to say.' So they all stayed!

Drunkenness and petrol sniffing caused disruptions. The old warehouse community store made of corrugated iron used for the meetings echoed with every dog fight or disturbance, despite being packed out. Young people hurled rocks onto the roof or rattled sticks along the corrugated iron walls.

Yet, somehow God moved sovereignly that weekend. Hundreds came to new life. A change took place in the spiritual realms over that place.

A couple of months later, Djiniyini led a smaller team from Galiwin'ku to Warburton in response to another request for help. Once again the Holy Spirit moved in power. Hundreds had prayer for the release of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, receiving supernatural signs of his answer and a real sense that God was anointing people for ministry.

The first test of this change came through a horrible car accident where six young people were shockingly burned. Instead of plunging into ceremonial grieving, wailing, injuring themselves and seeking revenge, the Christian leaders went to the hospital to pray for the young people, some of whom were dying. Christians went around comforting and praying with the families and ministering to them.

Within a few weeks a team went out from Warburton to share what they had received. In 1982 the team had up to seventy on the road for months at a time, preaching the gospel all over Western Australia. Their teams picked up new members from each community they visited. No outside church group supported them. Basically it was a tribal movement.

The revivals of Arnhem Land and the Central Desert resulted in thousands of aboriginal people having their lives changed from misery to new life in Christ. Families were re-united and many family relationships healed. The misery of alcohol was exchanged for joy and hope. Over 1,000 people were baptised. In one small town 150 were baptised. Even non-aboriginals, seeing the changes, made their own commitments to Jesus Christ.

Sometimes God worked through unusual events to deal with social evils and sins. A group of gamblers were mocking Christians who were praising God in the front yard of a house in one aboriginal community in South Australia. Suddenly one of the gambler's vehicles started up, drove into a ditch, and burst into flames and the cards in the gambler's hands caught on fire. That is a true story! The people who told it gave the moral: 'Don't mock God.'

I have concentrated here on Galiwin'ku and Warburton. The Holy Spirit has moved strongly in other places as well, especially the Kimberleys, Fitzroy Crossing, and Roeburn in Western Australia, and in rural and urban areas of northern New South Wales. The details I have given portray some of the overall picture.

Results of revival

Has it lasted? The gatherings of 100 to 200 every night at Galiwin'ku gradually diminished. By August 1979, weekly Bible studies were established to nurture new Christians, and have continued. Five years after the revival began a core group of 30 to 50 people still met three nights a week for fellowship, with attendances sometimes as high as 100. In the nineties a strong core group is still meeting.

When I revisited Warburton and the whole region late in 1989 I saw that many had fallen away from the Lord and a lot of the fire had gone. I asked about the changes that remained. Even non-Christian European staff acknowledged that conditions were enormously better than before the revival.

Similarly I have seen some of the highs and lows of spiritual life at Galiwin'ku in several recent visits. Many have fallen away, and some still have an active faith but are not involved with the organised church.

However, conversions still happen, lives are changed, relationships healed, and there are miracles, physical healings, signs, wonders, dreams and visions among them. Many who did not know Jesus before the revival and had been real problem people now follow him with a strong commitment. Some still reach out to groups beyond the normal family responsibilities, including ministry to outcast groups.

There is a deep desire to work through the relationship between the gospel and their own culture, rather than sweeping it under the carpet or trying to deny their roots by rejecting all their culture. This process

will take time, prayer and hard work with the Holy Spirit's inspiration, guidance and strength. It requires prayerful support, not the misguided intervention of well meaning non-aboriginals.

Most of all they have a growing expectation of a further wave or move of the Holy Spirit. There is a new earnest calling out to God. I believe that what has happened is just a foretaste of an ingathering that is far greater than most of us have dreamed possible. Certainly the vision regarding Aborigines that God has given to many people, even before the revival, has only just begun.

The Lord gave Dan Armstrong a vision on the last day of his 1979 mission at Galiwin'ku. He saw the young men going out in groups and landing in other spots. Everywhere they went, a fire came up. He shared this with them and the Lord gave them the word from 1 Corinthians 1:26-29,

Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

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PERSONAL RENEWAL

Chapter 3 Pilgrimage in Renewal

John-Charles Vockler

Brother John-Charles wrote as an Anglican Bishop and the founder of The Franciscan Order of The Divine Compassion.

Until recently I would never have dreamed that I would sit down and write a testimony for a publication like this one, nor that it would have as its principle thrust my concern with and my blessings from the charismatic renewal.

I am an Anglican Bishop who was a member of the Society of Saint Francis and is now a member of the Franciscan Order of The Divine Compassion. Very early in life I was attracted both to Holy Orders and to the character and the witness of Saint Francis.

This attraction to St Francis greatly increased during my study in Theological College. I asked my bishop whether I might be allowed to go almost at once to test my vocation in a Franciscan religious community. He rightly pointed out that I had undertaken to be ordained in the Diocese of Newcastle and to serve in that diocese for five years. He added that if I were faithful in persevering in that vocation then he would be willing to release me in due course to test this other vocation to the Religious life.

However, as the years went by, other things presented themselves which seemed right and proper to do. In every case, when I sought advice, I was urged to go forward with those things. They included overseas studies and eventually a call to the episcopate in the Diocese of Adelaide. There I was Assistant Bishop before being translated to Polynesia to the Diocesan Bishop.

Many streams

I grew up in a Christian family. I was unable to accept the narrowly evangelical teaching which then characterized the Diocese of Sydney, that is, unable to accept it in its strict and partisan form. Nevertheless, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the teaching which I received in the Diocese of Sydney and in evangelical circles.

The narrower aspects of evangelicalism were tempered in my case by the parish in which I grew up, St John's at Dee Why, and by the liberal attitudes of my Sunday School teachers. They had been influenced by the findings of the last century of biblical criticism and research.

Whilst a student at Moore Theological College, I was brought into touch through Christ Church St Lawrence with a third stream of influence and theological insight in Anglicanism, Anglo-Catholicism.

I am grateful to all of these. Each school of thought enriched my life and to this day leaves its mark on me. I have never doubted God, though there have been times of coldness, barrenness, and infidelity to God's demands upon me.

I was very fortunate to find in a second hand book shop in Sydney a French book entitled (in English) *The True Disciple: The Priest According to the Gospel*. This book written by Father Chevrier, a 19th Century Capuchin Tertiary, had a profound influence on my life. From it I learned, among other things, a prayer which governed Father Chevrier's life: 'Lord, I am at your disposal'.

That prayer became, and still remains, a part of my life. It is, as I know, a dangerous prayer to pray. God has a habit of taking it at its face value.

Always there recurred the call to Franciscanism. So eventually I resigned my See of Polynesia and left to join the Society of Saint Francis. There I was enriched, very happy, and conscious of the continuing guidance and blessing of Almighty God. More recently God called me to found The Franciscan Order of the Divine Compassion.

Renewal overseas

My first contact with the charismatic renewal was in Paris. I was staying with a young French nobleman whom I had met first at the Abbey of Our Lady at Bec Hellouin. On this later visit to Paris I had accepted his invitation to stay with him. He mentioned that he had been booked in for a weekend conference before he knew of my coming. He invited me to join him there.

The conference was a meeting of several hundreds of Roman Catholic charismatics from in and around Paris. That weekend was, I think, one of the most moving experiences of my whole life. The joy! The warmth! The wonder of it all!

I spoke to an old priest, over seventy, whom I was somewhat astonished to find there. He said to me, 'Father, three years ago hardly any of these young people prayed. Now, look at them! If this is what the Holy Spirit is doing for them then I want to be part of it.'

He went on to say that in the beginning he had not fully understood it but that now he too was a part of that great joy.

I can shut my eyes now and I can hear and see the people, the smiles, the love. I can hear the wonderful sound of that group of people singing in tongues. I have never heard anything so moving, so beautiful, in all my life. It sounded like a gentle flock of birds taking off and it moved me deeply. It touched my heart.

Later, when I was appointed Assistant Bishop of Southwark, I shared in an Anglican charismatic experience, or rather, an ecumenical one in an Anglican setting. A number of Anglo-Catholic parishes had been deeply influenced by the renewal. I was invited to share in a day long meeting in one of them.

People from different denominations and from different traditions within Anglicanism had come. I remember with joy the charismatic Stations of

the Cross. I could not ever imagine such a thing myself. You may think, 'What an unlikely vehicle for praising God!' Yet it was a wonderful and profoundly moving experience filled with deep worship of our blessed Lord in his Passion, and marked with tremendous joy.

The Eucharist, with its time for prophecy and free prayer, was again a moving experience. Until then, that was novel for me. Looking back, I see how great an influence it had on my own thinking and my own changing patterns of worship. It all seemed so right and proper.

Later on, when people were invited to receive the laying on of hands, I went forward to do so. When they asked me what gift I wished to have, I replied rather cunningly as I then thought, 'Whatever the Holy Spirit wishes to give me.' As people laid hands upon me and prayed I was suffused with a great warmth and joy, filled with the spirit of love and an abiding peace.

I had other brief encounters with the charismatic renewal in the Diocese of Southwalk and always found them occasions of joy and love and peace. I found there was a blessing in it all which I was slowly receiving.

I knew that I was unwilling to surrender, unwilling to give a part of me. I felt, as so many bishops still do, that this was a great movement of renewal. Yes, there was something good here, but I was also saying, 'Good Lord, don't let it touch me!'

Renewal in Australia

On my return to Australia, to the Friary of the Society of Saint Francis in Brisbane, I was presented very soon after my arrival with a question. Could the brothers be allowed to go to the national Roman Catholic charismatic conference in Brisbane.

I was willing that some should go, and determined to go myself in order to keep an eye on them! We mustn't have these young men getting up to strange tricks. I wanted to know what was going on. I wanted to protect the community from any spirit of division.

Of course, I myself was deeply touched by the whole thing. The kind of charismatic experience being spoken about at this conference, deeply rooted in sacramental piety and churchly in character, was one which I found immensely attractive.

Before this conference, I had been worried by the naive fundamentalism which seems to me to afflict so many charismatics and the undue emphasis on external signs such as speaking in tongues. This emphasis, I felt, was a phenomenon which occurred when charismatic renewal was divorced from a normal churchly and sacramental life. Needless to say there was none of that at this conference.

The workshops on prayer were characterised by wonderful testimonies. Old ways of prayer had come alive for people under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit. I was struck at once by the way in which the development of the charismatic life paralleled at so many points the classical spiritual tradition about development in the life of prayer.

The shared prayer, the public meetings, and indeed the whole conference up to the last great mass, were characterised by joy - a joy made sad by the sacramental disunity which separated us at the altar.

At one of those meetings someone prophesied that the Spirit was moving powerfully among us to heal. That prophecy was followed by one from Father Michael Scanlan from America. He said it had been given to him by the Spirit that the healing was particularly for those who were afflicted with arthritic and rheumatic pain.

While we went on singing those who had these pains were simply to claim the healing. I did so and felt a remarkable surge of power. From that moment to this the pains that had afflicted me for almost twenty years have never recurred. Now that was a pretty impressive sign given to me!

A few weeks later I was staying with the Community of St Clare. A young priest who used charismatic gifts and was a friend of that community, was speaking to me. I asked him to lay hands on me because of an affliction in my ears. That too was healed. Other physical disorders remained with me. I do not see any evidence in Christian history to suggest that physical healing will always be given, nor do I believe that healing is only of the body.

I did know that still deep within me there were parts of my life which were unsundered, which I was keeping to myself. I also knew that some of the things which still afflicted me were related to that unwillingness to surrender.

At a national charismatic conference in Adelaide in 1976 in which many Roman Catholics shared, I made that surrender. I was healed in yet another part of my body and received a baptism of love of a most wonderful and intense kind.

For all this I give thanks to almighty God and I praise him for all he has given me. Like many others, I came to speak and indeed to pray in tongues for the first time when alone. It began in a place where many people would least expect, while I was staying with an enclosed contemplative community of nuns.

Effects of renewal

This experience has been pre-eminently one of love and of great joy, of a calm assurance, and of a revivifying of all that I have always believed and all that I have been given. It has meant for me a new ordering of my life, a new place for holy scripture, a new sense of priorities, a deeper peace, and I believe it has made me more readily available to people, particularly those from whom I differ.

For me, this total experience grows out of my baptism, that is my baptism in water in the name of the Holy Trinity. That is the source and origin of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of all that has touched my life. I prefer not to speak of baptism in or by the Spirit, but rather of a being filled up with, or of having a new flow of, grace. Words, as the mystics have found in every age, are hopeless for speaking of the deepest mysteries of life.

I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit of God is at work in his church, restoring its foundations, bringing new life, new hope, new power. Anyone would be very foolish to judge this renewal simply by those who have experienced it but misunderstood it, misused it, or over-emphasised its secondary external phenomena. My deepest reservation is the frequent association of charismatics with right wing politics.

It would be sad for these reasons to stand aside from it all. We could then miss out on the promise which God offers to his church and his world through the renewal which the Holy Spirit alone can give.

My commitments and public life do not leave me many opportunities for sharing specifically in charismatic gatherings. But whenever I can, I am richly blessed. Since these earlier beginnings I have received further healings, especially through the ministry of Mary Rogers. I am conscious of how enriched my whole life and ministry have become.

I urge all who read this, and have their doubts, to look again at the passages in the New Testament which refer to the work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such a study can, I believe, only lead those who engage in it to see how far we have drifted from the power and the vitality of the primitive church. That power and vitality came from the gifts and the presence of the Holy Spirit recognized, sought after, and deeply desired.

May God bless all who read this and quicken in your hearts that deepened desire for the indwelling power of God the Holy Spirit. May he bless you in your life and your work and ministry.

May he use us all, whatever our theological and spiritual character, to restore to his Body the unity which is his will and his desire, for which he died, and for which he longs with an ardour beyond our comprehension.

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Chapter 4

A Testimony of Renewal

Owen Dowling

The Rt. Rev. Owen Dowling wrote as the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

I have never known a time when I did not believe in God. There have been times, though, when that faith has been confirmed in deep, memorable ways. It is difficult to pin-point a moment of conversion or a moment of being filled with the Spirit, yet I know in a profound way that I am born again in the Spirit and filled with the Spirit.

As a child I went on my own to a performance of Stainer's 'Crucifixion' by the parish choir one Good Friday. The words of the chorus 'Fling Wide the Gates' have remained with me ever since. That night I went home with the words written in my heart, singing the music to myself:

Fling wide the ..., fling wide the ...,
fling wide the gates
for the Saviour waits
to tread in his royal way.

I was both musically and spiritually stimulated by that experience, realising that the gates of my being needed to be opened to Christ, so that he could find his way in me. In recent times it has therefore been a poignant experience to sing in renewal gatherings the words of Graham Kendrick's song:

Make way, make way for Christ the King
in splendour arrives.
Fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.

In my teenage years I went on a holiday to Mount Buffalo in north-eastern Victoria. I arrived there in the dark, quite ignorant of the exciting views. The next morning I was up at dawn and walked from the chalet to the lookout opposite. Coming around the corner of the rock I was confronted with a breath-taking view of the Ovens Valley some three or four thousand feet below me. I spontaneously cried out words of praise to God, the creator of it all. I was bursting with joy and worship in a moment of exaltation of spirit I still remember vividly.

In my twenty-first year I was completing my training as a secondary school teacher in Melbourne. I knew, deep within myself, that I was called to the ordained ministry, but had not admitted it to anyone, there being a certain embarrassment about confessing such things. That embarrassment and fear went back to school days when I had been ridiculed for going to church. My older brother had even been abused and set upon by some of the local youths while we were on our way home from church, and had his collar and tie torn off. He gave as good as he got, but I kept my distance, coward that I was. By early adult life, although I was keen about my faith commitment, I still had that fear of ridicule from others.

I had listened carefully to a sermon at the church where I was the organist and felt strongly drawn to offering myself for ordination. The fear was there. What would people think? What would my parents and friends think, just as I had a teaching career well set in front of me?

As

I travelled home on the tram, sitting in the outside section with the wind whistling around me, I suddenly experienced a great freedom of spirit. Why spend my life doing one thing when I knew I should be doing something else? As I responded to what I recognised as God's call on my life, my fears fled in the wind blowing about me. I've never been ashamed of my calling from that day to this. I rejoice in it.

The healing ministry

My way into charismatic renewal was through the healing ministry. In those days a healing ministry and belief in the need for the church to exercise the gifts of healing through the laying on of hands and anointing with oil was taken for granted in the church I attended. Yet that was in the mid-1950's before charismatic renewal was spoken of or apparently experienced.

Thus when I began my life in the ordained ministry in 1960, I knew that an essential part of my ministry would be the expression of faith in Jesus the Healer. I somewhat tentatively encouraged people to seek healing through prayer, though with little apparent success.

I also learned that if I put my daily ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I was led remarkably to places and people where my ministry was required. On one occasion I was walking up to the door of a house to make a pastoral call when, led by some impulse, I turned around and went immediately right across to the other side of the suburb to visit a woman I had not met but had been asked to visit as her husband was ill in hospital. While I was at her home, the message came that her husband had died. My presence at that moment convinced her that God cared about her. She became a firm and convinced believer and member of the church as a result. I never forgot the lesson I learned. The promptings of the Spirit come. We must follow them.

Late in the 1960's I started attending meetings of the Order of St Luke (OSL), an ecumenical and international fellowship concerned with the theology and practice of the ministry of healing. At OSL healing services I soon found that I had to step out in faith as I laid hands on the sick and those requesting help. I also learned to seek help for myself.

At seminars and conferences organised by OSL and the various renewal gatherings I began to attend, I met and ministered alongside those who clearly exercised the gifts of the Spirit. It wasn't long before I had an expectation that these gifts, particularly words of knowledge, gifts of healing, words of prophecy, the gift of faith, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues, would be used as the people of God met in faith and unity of purpose together.

Filled with the Spirit

One day, at the conclusion of a healing service, when only a few people remained for further ministry, I began to weep in an unexpected and uncharacteristic way. A friend came alongside to minister to me. I made

a brief confession of a sin which had been on my conscience. He then prayed that I would be baptised in the Holy Spirit, though I wasn't even sure that I agreed theologically with that expression. I accept by faith, however, that that was what happened to me.

When I went back to the rectory, my wife Beverly was hanging out the clothes. She looked closely at me and said, 'What's happened to you? There's something different about you.'

I tried to explain. She told me that she had noticed that I had been tense and uptight in the past few weeks. Little had I known that my interior state was evident to her, an astute observer.

It was a year later that I experienced speaking in tongues, unexpectedly, though I had been open to the possibility of receiving this gift for some time. Meantime, I knew that a new awareness of the Spirit had come into my ministry with an increasing boldness in preaching and ministering in the name of Jesus.

The healing ministry grew stronger in the parish church of which I was rector, and all kinds of innovative patterns in worship began to emerge. A monthly service called Communion-in-the-round, which we held in the parish hall, drew great numbers. Effective dramatic presentations were used at the great festivals in the church's year.

A Thursday Fellowship developed providing 'Life in the Spirit' seminars, adult Confirmation preparation, and the development of lay ministries in the parish. This Fellowship catered also for people coming in from other parishes hungering for a deeper experience in the Holy Spirit.

Episcopacy

In 1981 I was appointed as Assistant Bishop in the diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and then in 1983 was elected as Diocesan Bishop. So I left the front line ministry of the parish, and still miss that contact with people on a continuing basis which parish ministry provides and the opportunity to watch a congregation grow in depth and breadth. However, I have many stimulating opportunities for preaching and ministering in the Spirit in my episcopal role.

I have to depend very much upon the Spirit, often not knowing the congregation or the body of people I am going to address as thoroughly as a priest knows the parish people. Yet I have known that God gives a word of knowledge in preaching and teaching, just as he gives that gift in the practice of the healing ministry.

Since the late 1960's I have become increasingly active in the Order of St Luke the Physician, and have given leadership at the national level. I have been called upon to speak and minister at many seminars, conferences, and healing services across the nation and beyond. This work significantly complements my administrative and pastoral role as a diocesan bishop. It ensures that I continue to exercise ministry as a teacher and a leader in healing ministry in a front-line sense.

In the Anglican rite for the consecration of a bishop the following words are said as a Bible is handed to the one being consecrated:

Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf;
feed them, devour them not. Support the weak, heal the sick,

bind up the broken, restore the outcasts, seek the lost.

I told some of my friends that when Archbishop Loane said those words to me on 25 March, 1981, I would nod my head at the words 'heal the sick' thus signifying to myself and to others in this small way that I accepted my responsibility to lead the church in its healing ministry.

One of my tasks as a bishop is to encourage the clergy in their ministry. The gift of encouragement proceeds very much from the Holy Spirit, the 'Paracletos', the one we can call alongside us to strengthen and encourage us. May I always be seen as an encourager.

Since being a bishop I have been asked to lead a number of parish and regional missions in various places. Perhaps the most exciting of these has been my ministry in Papua New Guinea, first with Dan Armstrong a Uniting Church minister and evangelist, and then with a team from my own diocese. A remarkable renewal in the Holy Spirit has been taking place, particularly amongst the youth of the Anglican Church in PNG, and I've been pleased to be part of that movement of renewal.

Incidentally, I have seen more physical healings take place there as a result of the corporate exercise of faith than I have seen in my own country. Without the barriers of the prevailing scepticism in Western society, both inside and outside the church, and in a society which allows people to move as a body in faith, it is clear that many barriers to healing are removed. I saw the blind receive their sight and the lame walk.

A movement of renewal that has brought much blessing to my own diocese as well as to a number of others is the Cursillo Movement. Conceived in Spain where a Roman Catholic bishop and a layman devised a way of bringing spiritual renewal to a spiritually moribund church, the movement has spread to some parts of the Anglican Communion as well as throughout the Roman Catholic Church. People drawn from a number of parishes go apart for three days of renewal of faith and vision together.

The team which leads the Cursillo prepares over many months, including much prayer. Most of the leadership is given by lay people. Those at the Cursillo experience significant Christian community, usually far richer than they have experienced before. It is not at all unusual for a significant spiritual awakening to take place at a Cursillo weekend. The bishop presides at the concluding Eucharist of the Cursillo, thus associating himself strongly with the whole process of renewal and commitment across the diocese. This link with Cursillo has been a particular blessing for me in my own ministry in the diocese.

Changes the Spirit brings

Charismatic renewal has brought many blessings to my own ministry and to the church at large. I would summarise them as follows:

1. Boldness in the Lord.

I have noticed that each time the Spirit moves in me or in the people of God, timidity in matters of faith diminishes. A mixture of holy boldness, love and wisdom comes in its place (see 2 Timothy 1:6-7). Timidity is the besetting sin of many of us. It enables us to refuse to do what God is calling us to do, but so politely!

2. The Body of Christ goes into action.

Believing and ministering together is a powerful thing. The various gifts of the Spirit are given, not so much to individual believers, but to the Body of Christ. These various gifts are given: words of wisdom, words of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, of the working of miracles, of prophecy, of discernment of spirits, of tongues, of interpretation, and many other gifts too. As we allow these gifts to work together in various combinations, people are saved and healed. Through renewal in the Spirit, churches which have been paralysed, timid, divided, uncoordinated, even moribund, can move into action. My desire is to be a catalyst of change in that revivifying process.

3. Worship is revitalised.

Through charismatic renewal I have been led into Spirit-led and Spirit-filled worship. The liturgy is still important in giving bones and structure to the church's worship, but I have found that the use of choruses and refrains, dance and movement, the employment of various musical instruments and opportunity given for the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit by various members of the body has brought a new power and attractiveness to worship. Nor is it turning away from tradition; the old and the new can come together in an exciting way.

4. Revival of evangelism and sense of mission.

The church develops an emphasis on evangelism where charismatic renewal takes place. Within recent years I have seen my own denomination begin to change its basic emphasis from pastoral to evangelistic.

The African part of our church has had this character from the days of missionary expansion and the African revival. Now, because of the explosion of growth in churches in Africa and other parts of the third world, the preponderance of membership of the Anglican Communion has swung this way. Within the Australian church we are also witnessing a considerable revival among young people and a new vitality in many of our congregations.

The Lambeth Conference of bishops of the Communion in 1988 set the pace in proposing a decade of evangelism for the nineties for all our churches. The momentum for this came from within my own small group in the Mission and Ministry section of the Conference. The initiative has been taken up in a remarkable way all round the Communion. We see this as a leading of God's Spirit. So we are expecting considerable renewal, change and growth as a result.

The clear mission statement of Lambeth, and the beginning of the Lambeth report, is as follows:

1. to proclaim the good news of the kingdom;
2. to teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
3. to respond to human need by loving service;
4. to seek to transform unjust structures of society.

Many dioceses and congregations have adopted this statement or something like it or in its spirit. I see the changes taking place in the Anglican Church world-wide as of the highest importance - this important struggle to change from maintenance mode to mission mode.

I believe this clarity of purpose came from the Spirit of God. The charismatic renewal movement across the church and in my own life and ministry helped prepare the way for this kind of clarification and sense

of spiritual energy. A clear benefit in belonging to a world-wide communion is that inspiration and enthusiasm can spread from church to church as well as from heart to heart.

5. Where the Spirit is, there's joy.

I ponder a note on which to conclude. What has happened to me since the Spirit has been released in me? What has happened in churches where the renewal of the Spirit has been experienced individually and corporately?

I would say there has been a marked increase in joy. The kind of joy which can be shared with others. The kind of joy no one can take away from you. The joy that is really the joy of heaven, of which Jesus spoke. From the first time when I spoke in tongues until now, joy has been brewing up inside me.

That joy finds expression in music, in words, in dance and in love for men, women and children. That joy, I notice, has given a new boldness and a zest for life and love which I trust will never depart from me. That joy is precious.

It is the presence of Jesus. It's meant for everyone. Nothing, not even death itself, will rob us of that joy.

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Chapter 5

The Disquieting Presence of the Spirit

Charles Ringma

The Rev. Dr Charles Ringma, wrote as the founder of Teen Challenge in Australia, and an Assemblies of God minister.

They keep coming. A maze of young people in need: angry teenagers addicted to illegal drugs, runaways disillusioned with home and school, petty criminals preying on those who are already in so much trouble, the suicidal who welcome death but fear its final power.

Do Christians hold answers for such people? Can God bring change, healing and hope? Is the power of the Holy Spirit available to us in this tough work? I needed to know. My search began a long time ago.

My search for the Spirit had nothing to do with exposure to the pentecostal or charismatic movements. I had never heard of them. Nor did it have anything to do with wanting some psychological fulfilment. I was not looking for the Spirit to heal me or to fill me with joy.

No one's experience of the Holy Spirit will be quite the same as another person's. Not only does the Spirit work in different ways, but we all begin our search for a deeper life in the Spirit from different perspectives and with different hopes.

This account is no exception. Since my experience of the Spirit's work has led me in several non-conventional directions, I describe the Spirit's presence as disquieting. I do not suggest that the Spirit's work is in any way negative, but it can be disturbing. It can turn our world around.

My search in the mid-1960's came directly from working with the aboriginal community and then embarking on a course of theological education to prepare for further ministry. I had the sinking feeling that I and the church were quite powerless. This formed a sharp contrast to what I read in the book of Acts.

The New Testament, and especially the Acts of the Apostles, is so obviously full of the exploits of the Holy Spirit. Every page breathes with this divine dynamic. The early Christians were undoubtedly caught up in the slip-stream of the Spirit. They had power to cast out demons. They witnessed boldly, loved dynamically, and gave liberally. They turned the world the right way up for Jesus their Lord.

I could not understand why the church of which I was a part lacked this dynamic. The suggested theological explanation that the Holy Spirit had stopped working in this dramatic way at the close of the apostolic era rang untrue, had no biblical basis and was contradicted by history.

The Holy Spirit literally seemed to be the churches' neglected possession. He was more of a stranger than an empowering Friend.

Seek and find

My search was not a solo effort. Together with my wife, Rita, and fellow theological students, we turned to prayer. The cry of our hearts was that God would revitalise his body, the church, and use us as his members. We had little idea what this meant and had no idea of the costly consequences.

With 'seek and you shall find' as a divine working principle, we not only prayed but avidly read the books of Andrew Murray: 'The Full Blessing of Pentecost' and 'The Spirit of Christ'. These helped to open our understanding. The key to this New Testament dynamic and power, according to Dr Murray, was the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This experience of the Spirit turned a cowardly bunch of disciples into bold witnesses to the resurrection of Christ.

My prayer and reading were not immediately rewarded. Nearly two years later a 'chance' meeting with a missionary brought my immediate quest to fulfilment. A simple prayer with the laying on of hands brought about a wonderful encounter with the Spirit.

I vividly remember this experience. It was as if gentle waves of electricity penetrated every facet of my being. I was overwhelmed by the nearness of God and the all encompassing love of Christ. Praise spontaneously burst out and I found myself expressing to God my deepest feelings and thoughts in an unknown language. This initial experience lasted many hours through the night until I lapsed into a quiet sleep in the early hours of the morning.

A comparison of Acts 1:5 and 2:4 (you will be baptised in the Holy Spirit, and, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit) shows that this baptism in the Spirit is the initial experience of being filled with the Spirit. It was accompanied by supernatural manifestations such as tongues and prophecy.

The important point is that Spirit-baptism is an experience. The Holy Spirit is actually poured out, comes upon, fills, and is given to the believer.

Many believers testify that this experience of the Spirit has

1. led them to a new awareness of the presence of God;
2. given them a revitalised love for Jesus;
3. provided a stimulus in Bible reading;
4. given them new dimensions in praise and worship;
5. brought the gifts of the Spirit into their lives; and,
6. given them power and boldness in Christian service.

New directions

This blessing of the Spirit led to a serious re-evaluation of my life's direction, dismissal from ministry in my church, and my embarking on a street ministry among our city's abandoned people: alcoholics, drug users, prostitutes and the homeless. The Spirit's impact on me took my footsteps away from the ecclesiastical fortress into the streets.

That eventually led to the founding of Teen Challenge in Australia. This ministry, made famous by David Wilkerson's book 'The Cross and the Switchblade', believes that the power of the Holy Spirit drives men and women out of the upper room into the streets of human suffering and misery.

The heart of the Teen Challenge ministry is not simply to counsel and to provide care and shelter. It is to disciple broken young men and women so that they come to a wholeness in Christ and in the power of the Spirit seek to bring new life to others. In this quest for wholeness, the power of darkness needs to be confronted, the hurts of the past need to be healed, and a whole new practical and responsible way of living needs to be embraced.

Working with broken and disadvantaged people is no easy task, particularly when such persons share in your own home life. It is made more difficult when the very churches which also claim the Spirit's power show so little concern for the poor in our cities.

Yet, working with the broken also carries a great blessing. We discover that in spite of the Spirit's presence, we also are broken and wounded in our own lives. The coming of the Spirit gives us power, but we too need to make the journey toward wholeness and to experience God's healing love.

Our work with broken people soon brought home the fact that their condition has not come about simply through their own fault. We live in a fallen world, full of injustice. Some of these young people have been terribly sinned against through physical, emotional or sexual abuse and rejection.

That harsh reality brings with it the challenge to mend some fences at the top of the cliff, not just to care for those who have fallen over the cliff. This led to the development of various training programmes. It also led to confronting the political powers about providing greater services for those who are disadvantaged. Such political activism has not always been understood by my charismatic brothers and sisters.

The way ahead

These ministry experiences over two decades have been a strong reminder that in our broken and fragmented world we need community. The Spirit desires not only to bring new life and power for service through his gifts and graces, but also to build community. This community of mutual care, support and fellowship needs to find expression in our homes, our places of Christian ministry, and in our churches.

In the last decade, charismatic renewal has been mesmerized by church growth strategies. Such growth, without commitment to one another in true community, is shallow.

Building community is an expression of the Spirit's love and power. But among God's people it has fallen on hard times. Yet clearly, the coming of the Spirit is not simply about personal gain. It is about sharing life together.

The Spirit usually comes in a ministry context. We express the Spirit's life in a particular church culture. In the late 1960's and early 1970's the context of the Spirit's coming among us had to do with power for service and the search for unity and community. In the 1980's and 1990's the focus has shifted considerably.

Now the search for the Spirit is generally seen in terms of personal well being. The quest for unity and community has largely been lost.

We have domesticated the Spirit. We seem to have promoted belief without commitment, faith without obedience, blessings without faithfulness, power without character, spirituality without suffering, grace without servanthood, prosperity without discipleship, and life without repentance or restitution.

The 'pulpits of privilege' must be abandoned by those willing to heed the call of the Spirit as we forsake power for ourselves in order to serve the powerless.

In the years ahead we need to encourage a new quest for the Spirit where the emphasis falls on power for service, the building of community, and the merging of evangelism with prophetic justice.

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Chapter 6 A Different View

Dorothy Harris (Mathieson)

Dr Dorothy Harris, formerly an experienced missionary and a Baptist pastor, wrote as the Australian Co-ordinator for Servants to Asia's Urban Poor.

Charismatic renewal brought joy, healing, and freedom to minister, to heal, to prophecy, to worship, to share. For the first time many of us discovered that 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom' (2 Corinthians 3:17).

We became freer, released from constrictive personal baggage. But the freedom brought us closer to the tenderness of the Father's heart and also to his anger at so much endemic injustice against the poor.

This is just what happened to a little group in New Zealand in the early 1980's. They discovered renewal as more than a journey of spiritual capitalism, piling blessing upon blessing, polishing devotion, craving more and more joy. The Lord opened their eyes to see that true fasting meant commitment to the poor, and particularly to the millions of squatters in Asia's megacities. Luke 4:18-19 could no longer have a merely privatistic, spiritual application:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

They discovered the broken, whom the Holy Spirit could heal, were not only those suffering the debilitations of Western affluence, but the Asian poor trapped in the misery and the injustice of corrupt economic and political systems. The captives to be set free were not only the bored indulent but those voiceless victims, deceived by glitzy tourism in Asia's sex industry.

'The Spirit of the Lord is really upon us,' this little group realised. He led them to commit themselves to going out in teams to bring the liberation of the gospel to those yet unreached in urban slums. So the new mission, Servants to Asia's Urban Poor, gradually was born.

Servants is now a network of devotional communities, whose members live among the poor, boldly preaching the gospel, doing justice and establishing fellowships of disciples. Families and singles, young and mature, have formed teams from New Zealand, Australia, Britain and Switzerland. By 1991 there were 22 (plus 14 children) in Manila, 11 (plus a child) in Bangkok, 2 (plus 2 children) in Dhaka, and plans for more to move into Kathmandu, Phnom Penh and other megacities.

When you live with the poor and try to respond to the Spirit's desire to bring order out of chaos and beauty out of ashes, you get a different

view of many things including worship, the missionary role, and conversion.

A different view of worship

Recently in Manila the Servants team met for their regular worship time after three weeks of slum living. It takes some time to become exuberant in worship when we are weary with poverty and its impossible solutions, sickened by our own shortcomings, and saddened at yet another believer falling away because the way is so hard.

The team members were entering God's throne room in worship, with all its resplendent majesty, when one person read Isaiah 6:1, 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple' (Isaiah 6:1).

Then another team member started to weep. 'It's not all glory and splendour here at the throne. There's ugliness and suffering too. The Lamb is still slain since the foundation of the world. We're worshipping the wounded One, the still scarred One. We are coming into his presence, but some are filthy because we are bringing with us the broken, the pock-marked, the limping, the malnourished. They are coming with us to the throne, the poor of the slums where we live. But the ugliness does not diminish the splendour because his splendour is always scarred. In our greatest moments in the glory of worship, we always have the brokenness of the world with us. Worship is not a trip into some detached antiseptic spirituality. The agonies of earth take on starker poignancy and urgency as we come to the scarred One from whom people turn their faces. This, my people, is the true beauty of worship.'

As we worship like this, we develop a distaste for limiting the baptism in the Holy Spirit to the transformation of personal irregularities. Why can't his power be released in justice for underpaid workers, food for the poor, a more equitable distribution of church resources, 90% of which are spent at home?

A different view of the missionary role

As charismatics, Servants members know the joy of discovering their spiritual gifts. But living among the poor, you can't operate under the neat precision of spiritual gift inventories. When a neighbour's child is dying, the gift of healing is necessary. Faced with the contortions of a demonised trance, you need the gift of deliverance. No pristine withdrawal will do: 'Sorry, this is not my gifting.'

Living among the poor we realise the Holy Spirit wants to do totally new things in us and through us. We cannot limit ourselves to formulations of his ministry more based on Western professionalism than on plunging into his mysterious and unchartable river of fulness of life.

Called Servants deliberately, we know something of the Spirit's liberation to serve the poor. But the prayer for grace to let the poor serve us is a more awkward request. Living and working among the poor exposes inferior motivations such as a need to be needed to thus maintain control and a perverted cringing for more acceptance from God and others through doing something hard.

Learning to serve, and promote your brothers and sisters in the slums to spiritual leadership and true dignity, mean dying to old and cherished leadership roles, former competencies, past glories and titles, and even effectiveness for God. But in serving and being served, we allow the true defender of the poor, our servant king, to reveal more of his heart and his ways. We want to grow in our understanding of what he meant by saying, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it for one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me' (Matthew 25:40).

A different view of conversion

We are constantly awed at that miraculous inner transformation by the Spirit of God. We preach this, live it, share it, and see many find new hope and joy in Jesus. But they are still surrounded by abject despair and injustice. Doing justice, based on that ever renewing life of God in us, becomes an integral part of conversion for workers with the poor. Conversion has become a very big word to us.

Certainly, beautiful Alice sins when she prostitutes herself to support her four children. She needs to repent. But so do we as Australians. Our tourism succeeds on the cheap availability of countless 'hospitality' girls in seedy red-light districts of Asia's big cities. So the conversion process for Alice means introducing her to the loving forgiveness of the Saviour as well as helping her to discover alternative income generating projects.

Merely calling Alice to personally repent confirms her hopelessness when she has no other way to buy rice for herself and for her children. Conversion also means working for a tourism based on respect for the dignity of people in other cultures.

All of life needs to be converted and redeemed into the loving purposes of the Father. So along with evangelism, Servants unashamedly introduce development projects such as cheap rice buying, milk for malnourished children, improved housing, pig raising, chickens, paths through mucky areas where children play, basket ball courts, better drainage - whatever project is decided upon as a priority by the people and to which they are willing to contribute.

There are no handouts producing dependency, a seemingly more respectable sin committed by some workers among the poor. Santa Claus type giving is a sure way to stroke Western egos and to demoralise the people of the slums.

Young Delfa is another stark example. If ever a life and a situation needed to be converted, it was Delfa's. But a quick request for her repentance would have made a parody of the Gospel.

Delfa lay alone in her little slum shack. A seventeen year old mother, her monstrous weeping cancerous arm sapped all her energy. Her man had left. Neighbours whispered, fearful the evil spirits would get them too. Her mother, her only companion, had died after too many years of scavaging. Delfa's mother's only indulgence had been to smoke cigarettes backwards. She had thought ash was good for the stomach. But the 'goodness' became emphysema.

The Servants team doctor found that surgery is available for the poor, but the task of fathoming the medical system is daunting - impossible for those unfamiliar with forms, interviews, queues, and moving out of the

slum. The Servants worker pled Delfa's case. Her rare cancer was so interesting at medical seminars that she was on display again and again. The cancer grew. She had to give her child away because she couldn't care for her. She preferred to die rather than to go to that hospital again.

It took several months of gentle pleading to get her to return. But who would care for her in hospital? Her only relatives subsisted by fish vending. Members of another slum church, which had been established by Servants, became her new family. Day and night by her bed they loved and prayed. The glory of the One who also suffered fell on Delfa. The Holy Spirit released his power to renew, heal and bring justice. Her amputation was over just in time before her lungs would have been infected. With her one arm now, she can sell T-shirts to survive, but there is no limitation to the joy and thankfulness she radiates.

Her community is still in abject poverty. The conversion process must continue and multiply through people like Delfa and the slum believers with whom we have the privilege of sharing our lives in Jesus.

My selfish compulsion is to constrict the working of the Holy Spirit to my never-ending personal needs. But for me as a Servants worker, living and working with the poor has taught me to pray, 'Father, don't let me squander renewal in the Holy Spirit. Let it flow out to those in need, especially to the many needy in the big cities in Asia.'

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Chapter 7

Ingredients for Unity

Gregory Blaxland

The Rev. Gregory Blaxland wrote as an Anglican Missionary working with the South American Missionary Society.

Shortly after I surrendered to Christ in 1950, something very beautiful happened. While I was praying I became overwhelmingly conscious of the presence and love of God and began to say things which had no meaning to my mind. Though puzzled by these words, I praised God for the new sense of his closeness.

Lacking understanding, I suppressed any further promptings to speak this way. Some time later I was taught that the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, or the 'spirituals' as they are literally called in 1 Corinthians 12, ceased with the apostles.

Subsequently I began to preach against Pentecostals. My first experience of Chilean Pentecostals in 1962 only produced a further negative reaction on my part. How I was to regret these attitudes in later years and had to seek forgiveness for them!

Fresh infilling

Between 1950 and 1970 God granted me several very wonderful infillings of the Holy Spirit. None of these, however, were accompanied by the unintelligible speech of 1950. Through many trials, some physical, some family, and some financial, God was softening an otherwise often proud and self-sufficient individual.

In 1970, during my second term of missionary service, through further trials and an increasing sense of spiritual dryness, God graciously brought me to the end of myself. I called upon the Lord in anguish of spirit to revive me and fill me afresh with the Holy Spirit. God did that and then led me to experience and accept the reality of supernatural gifts of the Spirit.

This experience was accompanied by what I can only describe as a baptism of heavenly love and a recurrence of the unintelligible language of twenty years previously. My mind said silently, 'Lord Jesus, I love you.' My first love which I had abandoned and which had grown cold now returned in an even fuller measure.

I had once more fallen in love with my Lord and Saviour. I sensed an inexpressible love for him, a desire to worship him, and a delight in his presence to a degree hitherto unknown. It was this that led my wife and I to praise him in a way which made us feel we had never really praised him before.

A wonderful sidelight on this is that I was very ill at the time but praised God in faith for my healing. Two months later God completely healed me in an instant.

I felt a love for my fellow Christians in a dimension which had been sadly missing in my life. From then on I began to express it in tangible ways.

Previously I had desired to see people won to Christ. Now this concern was greatly heightened.

For me, this was a personal spiritual revival and renewal.

Love

Heavenly love now became more predominant in all my ministry. Little by little it was reproduced in my congregation as more and more entered into the reality of their inheritance in Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Love broke down or melted so many barriers which had been there before between myself and others - missionaries, national Christians and members of other denominations. We saw an increasing drawing together of those of differing backgrounds, beliefs and experiences.

This surely demonstrated Romans 5:5, that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. These words speak of infinite abundance. No mere human heart or life can contain such a limitless flow. It must in turn overflow to others.

This overflow began to manifest itself in many wonderful ways. One of the most significant of these was the all night prayer vigils of praise and prayer. These were commenced in different congregations and denominations. Growing numbers of those who longed for a national spiritual revival became involved.

Our love also manifested itself in practical concern for the material needs of fellow Christians through some beautiful acts of sacrificial giving.

As is usually the case, everyone in the congregation was not ready to respond to this movement of the Holy Spirit. Some held back. But these were times of great spiritual enrichment for those whose lives were open and ready to receive all that God wanted to do with them no matter what that meant.

Jesus Christ was crowned Lord of lives that had previously only paid lip service to that Lordship. Those lips were now praising God from hearts and lives flooded with love and gratitude to the One who first loved them.

Humility

Then God showed me there was yet more to be done in my life to blend me with the rest of the church. I thought God had taught me much about humility through some very traumatic humbling experiences. Yet the Lord wanted me to learn much more, and to practice it daily.

I found many opportunities to humble myself before others! God gave me grace enabling me to do so. This in turn led to a greater sense of liberty from being bound up in self. My multi-faceted pride began to

crumble. In its place God was giving a unity with others which my friction-causing pride had hitherto made impossible. In the formula for revival, humility takes pride of place!

Since then I have continued to discover how difficult it is to fight against love and humility. How attractive they are! We need to clothe ourselves with humility and serve one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble' (1 Peter 5:5).

Unity

Renewal by the power of the Holy Spirit produces the love and humility which are basic ingredients for unity in the church of Jesus Christ.

I recognise and praise God for the reality of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. While grateful to God that these are still present-day evidences of his power, I am even more concerned that we allow the Holy Spirit to draw us together in unity. Jesus prayed for this.

Many Christians appear to care little that the church is divided. Too many show a lack of interest in seeing Jesus' prayer 'that they may all be one' (John 17:21) truly answered.

Christians of all denominations often exalt their interpretation of the Bible above the unity of the church. They seem far more interested in pushing their doctrine onto other Christians than they are in experiencing unity with them. To say that their doctrine must be the basis of unity is to deny the possibility of such unity.

Other Christians are caught up, or hung up, on the importance of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit and of getting everyone to have the same experience of the Holy Spirit as they have had. I believe this is simply being freed from one system to be bound to another.

All such systems are the product of human pride. Almighty God does not own any such system. Sadly, there are tragic evidences of division among the ranks of those who claim to know how to live in the unity of the Spirit.

There can be no unity without humility. We can become either so proud of the correctness of our doctrine or so proud of the wonder of our spiritual experiences that there is no room for humility or unity.

One King

There is only one kingdom of the King of kings. Although we often pray that it will come, by our lives and attitudes we build other kingdoms - denominational, organisational, doctrinal, liturgical or simply individualistic. These are ours and of our making, not of God's creation nor to his glory.

We say 'Your kingdom come' with our lips but in our hearts and minds are saying 'providing it is my brand'.

The church, the body of Christ, still presents a pathetic picture of suppurating sores, internal haemorrhaging, deep wounds and broken limbs. The challenge of a beloved South American friend still rings in my ears: 'If we are perpetuating division in the body of Christ (the church) or

doing nothing to heal it, then we are more guilty of wounding that body than ever those Roman soldiers were guilty of crucifying his physical body, for at least they were fulfilling the eternal plan of God.'

I urge you in the name of our one Lord to put aside self-interest in all its justifying and plausible forms. May God the Holy Spirit unite us in reality. We will never know true unity at the foot of a doctrinal statement, but only at the feet of Jesus.

Let us fall prostrate in simple humility before the Lord alone. Then let us rise to do what Jesus wants; to love one another (John 13:34).

Then we will be ready for our King to come. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

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Chapter 8

New Dimensions

David Todd

The Rev. David Todd wrote as a Presbyterian minister

I became a Christian at the age of 18 from a non-church background. Although I attended a church high school, it had no strong impact on me as far as Christianity was concerned.

A godly teacher on the staff, however, did have a real influence on my becoming a Christian. He conducted a lunch hour interdenominational organisation known as the Crusader Union.

Soon after I received Christ into my life, the speaker at another meeting I attended commented incidentally that Pentecostalism was of the devil. This comment coloured my thinking for many years. I had no contact with any pentecostal groups but some things I heard second hand seemed to confirm that what I had been told was right.

I started to attend a Presbyterian church and was very active in the life of the church as well as in Crusader activities. After I had been a Christian for about six years I received a very clear call to train for the ministry. In due course I was ordained as a minister of the Presbyterian Church.

People were helped through my ministry. Yet I had a growing realisation that something was lacking, though what that was I was not sure.

Some years later I received an invitation to hear a special speaker at a Presbyterian church that had begun to be involved in the charismatic renewal. It was during our annual Assembly which extended over that weekend.

There had been a long debate on the Friday night at the Assembly on how to reach youth in our day. In typical fashion we set up committees to look at it. On the Sunday morning I went to hear the speaker, Judson Cornwall, at the Presbyterian church. There were a great many young people in the church. I returned to the evening service and found the same thing. My session clerk was with me. I remember turning to him and saying, 'They've got the answer.'

A closer look

So I decided I would take a closer look at this charismatic renewal and baptism in the Spirit, but with great caution because of what had been said to me when I was a young Christian.

For about 15 months I prayed, searched the scriptures, read books, and listened to tapes. I obtained cassettes from the Presbyterian Charismatic Communion in the U. S. A., now called the Presbyterian and Reformed Renewal Ministries. This helped me to look at it all from a Presbyterian and Reformed perspective.

I became convinced that this was what was lacking in my life. So I began to ask the Lord to fill that lack by baptising me in his Spirit. A hunger had developed in my heart that I felt could be filled in no other way.

Then one morning, as I was having a time of prayer in the church vestry, I had a sense of the presence of the Lord in a way I had never known before. It was so real that I felt that if I had opened my eyes I would have seen him standing there. This encounter has been vivid in my mind ever since. It was the beginning of a new walk with the Lord in a dimension that was more personal and real.

I did not speak in tongues at that point. Probably I still had traditional hang-ups on this. But the Lord is very patient and gracious. A few weeks later in a time of prayer, the prayer turned to real praise flowing from a heart overjoyed with the presence of the Lord. Then I found that the words I was using just didn't seem to be adequate to express to the Lord what I wanted to say. I was really groping to find words appropriate to the joy I felt and the praise I wanted to give. At this point new words in an unknown tongue began to flow. Although I was unaware of what I was saying, nevertheless I had a deep assurance that in those strange words I was expressing what I couldn't express in English.

In all this, the Bible became much more alive and relevant. I began to see answers to prayer in ways that I had never dreamed of before.

Through frustration on previous occasions, I had gone very close to resigning from the ministry a number of times. Now I began to experience a new sense of purpose with the power to fulfil it.

At first I kept what had happened to myself. But people were asking what had happened. They could see a difference in my ministry and preaching. So I told the elders what I had found, but did not push this experience on to my church people.

When people asked me, I simply shared my experience with them. In due course, in a variety of ways, a number of these people found Jesus Christ in a new and vital way that transformed their spiritual life.

Others involved

Around this time, God also began to move in other denominations in the town. What I found hard to accept was that a very strong move began in one of the local Roman Catholic churches. Strangely though, some years earlier I had remarked that I wouldn't be surprised if the Lord did a work among Roman Catholics just to teach us Protestants that he wasn't bound to work through us. Yet I was surprised!

The move of the Spirit also spread among Anglicans and Methodists. It led to a real sense of fellowship such as had not been known in that town before. The local Assembly of God also shared in this. We had some wonderful ecumenical praise and prayer meetings, and ministered to many people.

Sadly, as ministers and priests involved in this renewal moved on to other appointments, the zeal and enthusiasm began to wane. Others who were not committed to the charismatic renewal took their place. People tended to withdraw back into their own denominational activities. Some

efforts were made to try to keep an active unity between the churches, but it seemed to lack the former zeal and power.

Some people who had been involved in the charismatic movement tended to drift away. I became increasingly convinced of the need for careful biblical teaching so that people becoming involved were not just caught up on an emotional high but that they had a secure scriptural foundation for their experience. Otherwise, people tended to just seek the blessings and not accept the responsibilities. Recent efforts have been slower but more enduring and will lay a better foundation for church renewal.

What saddens me is that many churches have largely remained untouched by and aloof from the renewing work of the Spirit. We plead for renewal. Yet we seem to want to confine the Holy Spirit to narrow theological perspectives coloured too often by personal biases rather than openness to scripture.

At times there seems to be a real fear that the Holy Spirit will move in a way that will get out of control. The church and its ministers like to feel that everything is to be done decently and in order, but in seeking to do this we are in danger of restricting the work of the Holy Spirit.

For a long time it has been taught that spiritual gifts, especially those of 1 Corinthians 12 - 14, ceased with the apostles. Consequently, much that could benefit the church has been ignored and denied.

Years ago a fine old respected Presbyterian minister said to me, 'Without the baptism in the Spirit, our church is lost.' Similarly, Martin Lloyd-Jones in his books talks a lot about dead orthodoxy.

I can only pray that the Presbyterian Church will become willing to look at the charismatic renewal and baptism in the Spirit with greater openness and willingness to understand what this renewal is really saying, lest we be guilty of quenching the Spirit entirely.

The Lord is wonderfully renewing his church in the power of his Spirit. May we not quench the Spirit but welcome a revival of biblical Christianity in the whole church.

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Chapter 9

Renewal in the Holy Spirit

Barry Manuel

The Rev. Barry Manuel wrote as the senior pastor of Morphett Vale Baptist Church in Adelaide.

One Sunday morning in May 1976 God graciously filled me with the Holy Spirit. It was an overwhelming experience.

Early that year I had entered a difficult period in the ministry. I was in crisis. The way I had faced strong opposition had created an atmosphere of bitterness and strife. My reaction to the opposition was wrong but God used that situation to do a wonderful new thing in my life.

After returning from a week in Sydney my wife and I had to resume ministry in this difficult situation. On the Saturday evening we agreed that we needed to be filled with the love of God. We believed that the Father had to touch us with his love deeply so that we could love in a new way.

The next morning my prayer was answered. As I prayed in my study I was overwhelmed with the love of God. He touched me. I had no doubt about that. The love of God was poured out in my heart through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:15).

On that morning the Holy Spirit of the living God poured out God's love in a way I had never known before. I did not speak in tongues then but received that gift several months later.

I was different and many people noticed the difference. As I read the book of Acts through I felt a new excitement. I was hungry now, more than ever, to see a powerful work of God in my ministry and in the life of our churches.

This new encounter with the living God has had a deep effect upon me. What have been the ongoing results?

Relationship with God

I have entered into a deeper relationship with the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Joy in worship and praise has become real to me. Some of the most precious times in my whole life have been the private and corporate times of worship.

The Shorter Westminster Catechism says that 'the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.' My experience of renewal in the Holy Spirit has led me to understand more deeply what it means to glorify and enjoy God.

Prayer and praise fit together now. When I meet with other Christians I want to worship our God with them. It is not enough just to attend a service and listen to a sermon. There must be opportunity to truly worship God in praise and prayer.

Relationship with others

The Holy Spirit has enabled me to be more open and loving toward other people.

God has led me into deeper relationships and enabled me to see the need for working at relationships. So often, when I was confronted with difficult or awkward people I would back off and put up my defences. That was partly because I did not have a desire to build a relationship with such people and partly to protect myself from being hurt.

The Holy Spirit has given me a new desire to relate to all sorts of people and to keep reaching out even when that is not easy and may be painful for me. This emphasis has been growing in my life. I have seen how important relationships among Christians are. When Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:30 about not grieving the Holy Spirit he places that in the context of relationships.

Pastoral ministry

My renewal in the Holy Spirit has had significant results for me as a pastor. My ministry has been revolutionised by the Holy Spirit.

Preaching has been strengthened. There is a new effectiveness. People have been touched and challenged in ways that did not happen before. This is not static. It is not just a change for the better then a levelling off. There is continual growth and strengthening in ministry. The Holy Spirit opens new insights from scripture and enables me to apply the Word more effectively.

Counselling has also become much more effective. The Spirit's gifts of the word of knowledge and prophecy have been invaluable tools in this ministry.

The Holy Spirit has often given me knowledge of people's problems and how to help them. I have discovered that the Spirit has revealed to me the cause of many problems. After prayer these people have experienced a wonderful release from the problem.

My ministry has been greatly strengthened by a new release of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in my life. Tongues has strengthened my prayer life. Prophecy and words of knowledge have enabled me to minister encouragement and help to many people.

The Holy Spirit has led me into a ministry of healing. Through healing prayer I have seen many blessed and encouraged and physically healed. I have much to learn in this area but I do thank the Lord for the way I have been led so far.

God has given me a new confidence in leadership of the church. I do not enjoy difficulties and conflicts, but God has enabled me to face them with less stress and strain.

Church growth

Finally, my new encounter with the Holy Spirit has been a catalyst for growth in the church. We have seen the church grow in many ways, including numerical growth and growth in the range of our ministries.

When I commenced the at Morphett Vale in 1982 I was the sole pastor. By 1990 I led a ministry team of six. That team includes the principal of our Christian school. Growth in the leadership team has been needed because of growth in the church. Developments in the nineties included a new awareness of mission and support for world mission along with outreach activities which cater for non-church children and families.

Under the leadership of a full time worker, our community services ministry has developed in many ways. We provide a service of food and financial help to people in need, counselling for those in crisis, and a very effective community craft and care programme.

We realise that we are on a journey as a church and are seeking for the Holy Spirit to grow us in every way that is God's plan for us.

In this brief overview I have indicated that my new encounter with the Holy Spirit has blessed and strengthened me and changed my ministry. I know that we cannot live on these past blessings. The Lord is calling us on. The challenge is to go on being filled with the Holy Spirit and ministering in the power of the Spirit.

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Chapter 10

Love Song

Ruth Lord

The Rev. Ruth Lord wrote as a Uniting Church minister.

How beautiful you are, my love,
how very beautiful!
Your eyes are doves
behind your veil...
You are altogether beautiful, my love;
there is no flaw in you. ...
You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride
you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes...
How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride!
how much better is your love than wine
(Song of Solomon 4:1, 7, 9, 10).

Solomon wrote many songs. He was a prolific poet and musician. Yet this one he calls the Song of Songs (Song of Solomon 1:1). This is it! Of all Solomon's songs, this is THE song.

It is inspired by God and included in scripture so that we may hear him speaking to us in the language and tones of a lover.

The renewal of Christians by the Holy Spirit now sweeping across the world is breathing life and love into our hearts and spirits. The bride of Christ is awakening again to the delights, the warmth, and the freedom of being loved and accepted by her lover, the Lord Jesus. He sings the ultimate Song of songs.

The realisation of being so totally loved, delighted in, and appreciated ('You are altogether beautiful, my love, there is no flaw in you'), brings wonderful healing and growth in its wake. The small pool of living water within us becomes a river that bubbles up and flows out. It overflows to brothers and sisters. We are loved! 'We love because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19).

John the beloved disciple sang this song. He was the one who stayed with Jesus and Mary at the foot of the cross; the one who wrote the letters of love; the one who said 'God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them' (1 John 4:16); the one who had the vision of the bride in Revelation. His constant message to the people of God is love, love, love.

Increased love is the sign of the Spirit's presence in renewal. How delightful it is to see a believer realise that above all things the Lord desires to be in a love relationship with all who believe. You see the joy that wells up and bursts forth in praise to God.

I can understand Mary the mother of Jesus, newly pregnant by the Holy Spirit, raising her arms, reaching out to God, and dancing in a release of joy as she sings, 'My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour' (Luke 1:46-47). Too much of God's Spirit to be contained! The Almighty One had done great things for her. He had

carefully sought and chosen her above all women to be so close and so intimately related to himself.

The Bride of Christ

The image of the church as the bride of Christ takes on deeper significance in the wake of renewal. We move beyond the concept of a distant love, a 'hands off' love, into an appreciation of Hosea's words, 'On that day, says the Lord, you will call me, "My husband," and no longer will you call me, "My Ba'al"' - my master (Hosea 4:16).

So we come to appreciate this loving relationship as it is expressed in the Song of Songs, and in turn we express it in our relationship with the Lord. To know that we are loved in this way, so totally, so without reservation, is marvellously freeing. Our Lord delights in us!

We find that as we dare to be open to Jesus and his love, so he is able to enter into our lives and make new the twisted and the broken places. He lovingly repairs the areas in which our growth has been stunted by the cruelty and the carelessness of others, and by the pain and disillusionment of being neglected, overlooked, rejected, or thought of no account. We respond to Jesus' tender healing touch when we are bathed in the warmth of his acceptance and love.

We become whole people in a way we hadn't realised was possible for us. We see the flowering of the personality, and the coming to fulfilment of the unique personhood that God has planned for each one of us from the beginning. It is truly wonderful.

Having had such a touch from the Lord we can only respond as Mary did with heartfelt joy and exuberance, and we are lost in wonder, love and praise.

This, for me, has been the primary impact of renewal. Other gifts and blessings flow from that. The one who is renewed in the love of Jesus desires only Jesus - not his gifts for themselves, but Jesus himself. Then prayer is a personal love relationship with the Lord as we commune with him.

Prayer becomes a means of union with the Lord so that we become one. From that union flow all the varieties of the fruit and gifts of the Spirit for others to share in our delight of the Lord's love and presence.

The giving and receiving of love strengthens us. We are encouraged to a greater openness in ministry to the Lord himself and then to others. Being secure in the love of Jesus, and confident of his nearness and indwelling power, we are able to open ourselves more to others so that we become greater and freer channels of God's love and grace.

Ministry to others

The sensitivity developed from listening for the quiet tones of the beloved helps in ministry. As we give ourselves entirely to Jesus, simply to love him and be loved by him, great charismatic gifts and spiritual empowering are freely given to us. Renewal has brought to the whole people of God both the desire and the expectation that we will all minister in the name of Jesus.

We have not only the desire and expectation, but also the ability given by the Holy Spirit. When the gifts of God are submitted to God, every believer has the potential for a vital and powerful ministry.

This is the only way in which the gospel may be truly proclaimed in all the earth. More and more people are being enabled to cast off the shackles of inferiority and insecurity and speak out the word of the Lord into all situations - a word of knowledge, of wisdom, of discernment, of healing, of encouragement.

These gifts of God's love are for all God's people. They are given freely to be used in every appropriate place. They are to be desired by us, but not just sought after as ends in themselves.

As we share in this love relationship with the Lord we can be tempted to try to recreate the excitement of the spiritual highs in charismatic experiences. While we are right to long for union with the Lord we should not lust after his gifts lest we become self-centred and open to deception.

Self-centredness and deception cause all kinds of strife. Many have turned away disillusioned or bitter. Others have seen the gifts, and known them to be good, but looked aghast at the selfish expression of them and decided that such a relationship with God is not for them.

Still others have suffered from a surfeit of emotion and spiritual excitement, so now stand back. They regard the joy of being in love with the Lord as an immature phase to be grown out of so that we can get on with the real business of serving God. In other words, they return to a safe concept of a distant love, a 'hands off' love, a situation in which we are comfortable, settled, and in control.

Some congregations which have been involved in renewal for many years appear to be settling down into the routine of married life, wanting the steadiness of familiarity, the comfortableness of being cosy and undisturbed.

We need maturity, certainly. Real love as well. Have we learned the secret of keeping romance alive, of delighting in our lover, and of being continually renewed by intercourse with him without the whole thing becoming humdrum and familiar and eventually not worth bothering about?

This is the challenge for renewal in the nineties. To hear again the voice of the Lord saying come away my love, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of spices!' (Song of Solomon 8:14).

Do we dare?

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CHURCH RENEWAL: EXAMPLES

Chapter 11 Renewal in a Country Parish

Barry Schofield

The Rev. J. Barry Schofield became the Rector of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Picton in 1956.

South-west of Sydney you cross the Razorback Range to descend into the town of Picton surrounded by closely rolling hills.

The first Anglicans worshipped there in 1829. By 1850 they laid the foundation stone of a beautiful sandstone church. The nearby Stonequarry Creek occasionally backs up in flood times, enters the church and rises to cover the pews.

Rivers of living water have flooded through the church also. At the turn of the century the church was keen and strong. Over two hundred packed St. Mark's each Sunday.

Hard times

After World War I the parish gradually declined. Attendances dropped. Offerings decreased. Activities lessened and spiritual impact diminished. By 1956 the average attendance at St. Mark's was about 13 persons on Sundays. The total offertories for the year was \$360.

I drove through Picton in January 1956 admiring the beauty of the countryside.

'What a lovely place to live,' said Shirely, my wife.

'Mark my words,' I declared with certainty, 'This place stinks and it is one place you will never find me.'

How wrong I was. I was inducted as Rector of Picton about twelve weeks later.

The Archbishop had trouble filling a vacancy in the parish. He asked me. I declined. He summoned me to his office and somehow I was convinced that the Lord required me to become his servant in Picton. I have never regretted my altered decision.

We'll try anything

The general attitude of the parish was 'Everything has failed; we'll try anything.'

I suggested we stop all fund raising activities, money making efforts, promotion, pledges, stalls, and everything except believers giving to the Lord willingly and thankfully as an act of worship.

'You might starve to death,' someone said.

'That will be my worry,' I replied, knowing that I could trust God. God did not fail us because it was his leading for us at that time.

In 1957 I suggested that we hold a missionary convention.

'What's a convention?' a warden asked.

'Well, you hire a hall. You put up exhibits. You get films and speakers, and ...'

'How long would you try to run it?' another asked.

'Oh, about a week or nine nights running,' I said.

'Nine nights! They won't come,' exclaimed another. 'They can't get into town.'

'We'll run free buses,' I countered.

'Who'll pay for it?'

'The Lord will move people to give through the offertories,' I said hopefully.

For years we held conventions. Hundreds have come to know Jesus as their Saviour and have been brought into the fellowship of local churches. Over thirty have served God in a full time capacity in the ordained ministry, the mission field or similar ministries.

The Lord greatly blessed our finances. In 1955 the parish's annual missionary giving was \$68. By the nineties the missionary giving had risen to \$35,000 annually. We are still a poor parish, a labourers' parish with a smattering of professionals. We know what it means to share one another's burdens.

Holy Spirit manifestations

Significantly, we find new life expressed in old forms. We pray in the Spirit. We sing in the Spirit. We have a wide and valued ministry of prophecy. God heals and does miracles. Yet there has been no rupturing of the old structures.

We have not thrown away our traditions. To have done so, for us, would seem libertine and lawless. Instead, we have enjoyed experiencing the refreshing power of the Holy Spirit enlivening the old liturgy.

How did this happen?

In 1965 twelve parishioners were praying in the church.

One woman interrupted, 'Rector, I have grieved the Holy Spirit.'

'Oh well, I suppose you had better repent,' I said with some surprise.

'I am sorry, Lord,' she prayed. 'I will say that word you want me to say.' She quietly spoke one foreign word. My heart fell. Although I was glad because I knew it was a gift of the Holy Spirit, I knew that scorn, hostility, ridicule and persecution would follow.

We prayed with the other eleven and all believed that the Spirit had fallen upon them. A few prayed almost inaudibly a word that sounded foreign to me. During 1965 another forty or more received an infilling of the Holy Spirit and were privately given a new language of praise and prayer.

Rumours

For a while there were rumours. Some people were appalled. Others thought it was hilarious. At that time no one spoke aloud in tongues at any meeting in the parish, but rumours circulated to the contrary.

'Have you heard what's going on at St. Mark's?'

"No. What?'

'They're having prayer meetings where everyone speaks in tongues.'

'What's speaking in tongues?'

'It's a sort of hysterical state like you see in the madhouse.'

'This has got to be stopped.'

And so it went on. Those crazy stories brought people along to see what was happening. Many accepted Jesus and joined the fellowship of the church. The rumours died out and the Lord's work went on.

Some people still speak against these manifestations of the Spirit but they are not a controversial issue in the fellowship of the church. Even the gospel itself is a sign spoken against.

Looking back, the days of hostile rumours were hurtful then, but fruitful spiritually. They had the same effect on the growth of the church as manure does to a flower bed.

The present

We have gradually grown in our experiences with the Holy Spirit of Jesus. The parish council is never deadlocked. We often receive a prophecy that unites us by revealing a better way of doing something.

We have seen our worship become more meaningful and satisfying. The Spirit makes the services more interesting. They seem all too short. More and more people are involved in leading worship. There is a deepening sense of involvement and participation.

The manifestations of the Spirit of God are present but not obtrusive, not provocative, not divisive. Various ministries of the Spirit are developing. They bring honour to Jesus rather than to the person Jesus is using.

We believe that we are still moving into a coming renewal. We are all learners preparing for a revival unprecedented in Australian history.

God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh in the last days. For Australia those days are almost here.

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Chapter 12

Renewal in a Diocese

John Lewis

The Rt. Rev. John Lewis wrote as the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of North Queensland.

During 1972 Canon Jim Glennon came to Townsville at the invitation of the Bishop to preach at a healing mission. He also had heavy preaching commitments in three other centres of the Diocese of North Queensland.

Not only were people impressed by the preaching but many were moved to do something about it. Some received a special outpouring of the Spirit with an accompanying gift of tongues. Others received healings which they found lasting and inspiring.

We felt bound to form a prayer group and also to commence a healing service in our cathedral to which people could come and have hands laid on them. Prayers are offered for people present and far afield. Many are healed. For example, a woman with a pronounced arthritic condition which affected her hands and legs received prayer with hands laid on her in the cathedral. She then found that for the first time in years she could walk freely and her hands lost their swelling and pain.

Integral part of ministry

Renewal came to North Queensland Anglicans following the mission with Canon Jim Glennon and Pastor Norman Armstrong in Townsville. Since that time many congregations have enjoyed the fruit of renewal and a number of notable preachers and speakers have visited us.

The person most familiar to us in North Queensland is Canon Jim Glennon who first kindled the fire of the Spirit among us. Others include the Rev. Michael Harper, the Rev. Charles Widdowson, Mrs Anne White and Mr Steve Ryder. There have been many missions, prayer schools and conferences, especially in Townsville and Cairns.

Renewal is an accepted part of the Diocese and enjoys the patronage of the Bishop and senior clergy.

The Diocese gained many gifts from this renewal, especially in the areas of ministry. The Order of St. Luke was revived for healing ministries and healing services are now a regular part of the life of many congregations. Furthermore, the style of renewal with its expression in scripture choruses, extempore prayer and personal testimonies is now an accepted feature in many church services and gatherings of Christians.

In the past the Diocese had a reputation of being Anglo-Catholic. Now it is catholic in a different sense. There is a sharing of worship and praise among Anglican and other church families. We also have a greater interest in the wider life, mission and vision of the church of God throughout the world.

New insights

The first impact the movement on renewal had on North Queensland was to make Anglicans aware of the effectiveness of the prayer of faith and the confidence one enjoys when living in the Spirit of Jesus.

There have been many other insights.

1. A new interest in the Bible.

It is seen to be the living word of God. With renewal, people not only feel that the Bible comes alive but find themselves living the life of the Bible in a way that is real and meaningful.

2. The experience of Christians.

Personal experience has become an acceptable part of church life. People have been overjoyed to share experiences, the faith they see in others, and also to testify to their own living faith and life in the Lord.

In the past the Anglican emphasis was very much on the intellect and reason. These, of course, are vitally important, but so are the emotional and existential parts of life. Experiencing the reality of the Spirit of God and the gifts and fruit of the Spirit in one's life has become very real through renewal.

3. Total ministry.

Renewal has reinforced an emerging view that every Christian is a member of the body of Christ. As such each person performs vital functions and ministry in God's world.

People have been surprised, and often amazed, at the ministries they have received and the way in which they have been able to exercise or fulfil these ministries. The ministries follow the pattern spelt out in 1 Corinthians 12. This new concept of ministry has been accepted as an important part of renewal in North Queensland.

4. Gifts of the Spirit.

In recent years we have been led to see the importance of the gifts of the Spirit. We have become more aware of the source of these gifts, their manifestations, and the way in which they are received and utilised.

The Pastoral Care Board of the Diocese, for example, prepared sermon notes and group or personal studies specifically on the gifts of the Spirit. The spiritual gifts of wisdom, knowledge and discernment received special emphasis.

The gifts of the Spirit became not merely a matter of interest but a significant factor in exercising ministry. We encourage our people to take serious note of this emphasis in setting up church leadership groups, boards, committees and councils.

Many Christians here are no longer afraid to claim the gifts of the Spirit. They not only accept such gifts as tongues and prophecy but other gifts such as wisdom and knowledge which formerly were identified

mainly with academic achievements. Now they are also seen as God's gifts to his children for specific ministries.

Wider horizons

Charismatic renewal has certainly extended the boundaries of interest in North Queensland. In fact, one could say that the boundaries themselves are being removed. People in the Diocese have become aware of the activity and ministry of the Spirit in the whole church of God.

This led to many new developments.

1. New relationships outside the Diocese.

Our work has been enriched through gifted preachers, speakers and visiting ministers. This has included the ministries of organisations in Australia and overseas which foster renewal.

2. A new interest in publications.

A wide range of publications from Australia, England and the United States has created a great deal of interest and stimulated thinking and activity in the Diocese. This has been supplemented with audio and video cassettes, used extensively.

3. A new involvement with other people.

Conferences, conventions and schools of prayer provide valuable interaction with others.

The conference on renewal at Canterbury in 1978 was tremendously meaningful from my point of view in the early days of this renewal. It allowed people from the Diocese to be involved with members of this renewal movement throughout the Anglican communion worldwide.

Other inter-church conferences in Australia have helped stimulate ministry and spiritual interest in the Diocese. These have been greatly appreciated by people from North Queensland. Many people have gone off to these conferences and brought home insights and treasures, new and old, which we have greatly enjoyed.

4. Anglican Renewal Ministries of Australia (ARMA).

The work initiated by the Rev. Dick Wallace in the National Service Committee had an important effect for renewal in North Queensland. It gave the Diocese a formal connection with other personalities and agencies dedicated to renewal. That national agency developed into the Anglican Renewal Ministries of Australia (ARMA).

In the past the Anglican commitment to renewal was a very personal matter. ARMA helps to strengthen relationships within the Anglican communion in Australia. It provides far flung Dioceses such as North Queensland with a good working relationship with fellow Christians in this movement of the Spirit.

A renewed church

The Anglican Church in Australia, along with other communions of the one great Church of Jesus christ, has been blessed by this renewal. The pioneering discoveries of renewal are now widely acknowledged and incorporated into the regular ministry of many churches.

The church is being renewed. The new discoveries of the seventies have ripened into effective ministries through the eighties and hold promise for widespread revival in the church and the community in the nineties. To God be the glory. Great things he has done.

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Chapter 13

Renewal in a City Prayer Meeting

I. Observations by Vincent Hobbs

The Rev. Vincent Hobbs has been the priest in charge of Catholic Charismatic renewal at Bardon, Brisbane, since it commenced there in 1970.

My telephone rang at midnight after our last Catholic Charismatic meeting. The call was from a Protestant minister who had been present. He was still bubbling over with excitement at the wonderful fellowship he had experienced at the meeting.

His reaction was typical of the visitors from other denominations who meet with us. Who could have imagined a few years ago that such genuine and unplanned ecumenism would be going on now? And this is but one aspect of the renewal that is taking place in all the major denominations here and in other parts of the world.

Informal fellowship

What is charismatic renewal? I have never seen a satisfactory definition but I have mapped out this working description. It is an informal fellowship of men and women who gather together to praise God. This praise takes the form of celebration. We celebrate the presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is present and acting among us through his Holy Spirit according to his promise, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Matthew 18:20).

The essence of the meeting lies in the act of sharing. We share our personal faith in Jesus, our hope in God, our love of God and of one another. Through this act of sharing we grow in faith and love. We come to experience the reality of the power and love of Jesus in our individual lives.

This sharing is expressed through hearty singing, spontaneous prayer, testimonies, scripture reading, a short talk, and the use of charisms. These are special gifts of the Holy Spirit that people have received. Paul describes them in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14.

Notice that it is an informal fellowship as distinct from our formal worship and sacraments. It does not replace these. Rather, it gives the people a greater appreciation of them because it improves the quality of their own personal faith. In other words, charismatic renewal is, for us, the recovery of an area of neglect in Christian living. It complements and personalises the practice of religion.

In addition to finding personal fulfilment, we believe we are implementing the advice of Pope Paul: 'If we really love the Church, the main thing we must do is to foster in it the outpouring of the divine

paraclete, the Holy Spirit.' He also said, 'The Church's first need is to live Pentecost.'

Catholic bishops in the United States appointed a commission to study the beginnings of this renewal then called Catholic Pentecostalism. The report delivered in November 1969 states that 'The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church is not the acceptance of the ideology or practices of any denomination, but likes to consider itself a renewal in the Spirit of the first Pentecost. ... It must be admitted that theologically the movement has legitimate reasons for existence. It has a strong Biblical basis. ... The participants in the Catholic Pentecostal Movement claim that they received certain charismatic gifts. Admittedly there have been abuses, but the cure is not a denial of their existence but their proper use.'

Effects

What effect is charismatic renewal having on Roman Catholics in Brisbane?

People report the following:

1. A deep inner peace and joy.
2. A renewed spirit of prayer.
3. An awakening of real personal faith in Jesus our risen Saviour.
4. The reception of spiritual power (charisms).
5. A heightened realisation of the fatherhood of God through the Holy Spirit.
6. A better appreciation of official worship.
7. A real sense of fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ under the fatherhood of God through the Holy Spirit.
8. Solutions to personal problems - spiritual, emotional, physical.
9. Joyful, genuine ecumenism.

Please discard any ideas you might hear that this is just a tongues movement or that it is over emotional. Certainly we pray in tongues. It is a beautiful prayer gift; a very personal love language that we receive in order to praise God either alone or with others. It is not emotional but does produce a sense of interior liberty. It by-passes the limitations of our human minds.

Read about it in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Distinguish between prayer tongues and when a person in a meeting speaks aloud in a tongue which is to be followed by an interpretation in the vernacular.

Our meetings have a genuine freedom but are very orderly. Certainly there is joy. Don't most Christians need a real dose of that?

Our original prayer group at Bardon in Brisbane has seen the birth and growth of home prayer meetings, covenant communities, a communication centre, a prayer group fellowship, a leader's group, a youth group, intercessory prayer groups, an inner healing group, literature on prayer and wholeness, conferences, camps and outreaches.

To me as a clergyman one of the great blessings of charismatic renewal has been that it provides a real framework of spiritual communication with people. I have never before been drawn so close to God's people. The genuine friendship and mutual respect that has developed between the priests, nuns, and laity is truly beautiful.

I thank and praise God for the many opportunities that this renewal has given me to be a channel of God's love, and for the many occasions that I have received his grace through others.

II. Observations by Phil Audemard

The late Rev Phil Audemard was a Baptist minister in Brisbane in the early seventies when Catholic charismatic renewal began at Bardon.

The name Bardon became a symbol for an amazing development in Christian ministry in Australia. It pioneered renewal among Catholics in Brisbane.

Imagine a weekly prayer meeting of two hours or longer where human leadership is so unobtrusive it seems absent. Great joy and compassion are experienced by congregations of around a hundred.

The scene of this remarkable development has been the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary Magdalene in Bardon. This church became the recognised centre of Catholic charismatic renewal in Brisbane and a parent body of a growing movement among Australian Catholics. It meets the same kind of reserve within the Catholic Church which charismatic renewal often meets in Protestant circles.

Come and see

Some members of my church gave me the good advice, 'Come and see.' I have been and seen. Often. Every week is different. Three aspects remain constant:

1. The minimum intrusion of human leadership.
2. The spontaneity of the prayers and worship.
3. The warm sense of love embracing everyone.

On my first visit to the Bardon meeting I joined the congregation in hearty singing. We sang 'He lives,' and 'How Great Thou Art,' and 'To God be the Glory' plus songs native to charismatic renewal.

There were testimonies as nuns called upon the congregation to praise the Lord for conversions of unruly boys. Others gave thanks for bodily healing and many blessings. There was singing in the Spirit which I had never heard before, a spontaneous harmony of indescribable beauty as about half the congregation began to sing together softly in tongues.

Then the meeting moved into a time of specific prayer. People voiced personal needs: family problems, alcoholic relatives, shaky marriages, requests for the conversion of loved ones, and so on.

Suddenly a man began to pray brokenly along these lines: 'Lord Jesus, you know my family situation. You know what a rotten temper I've got. Lord, you know how the kids have given you away because of the rotten example we've set with our bickering and quarrelling ...'

The prayer got no further. The speaker broke down, sobbing. I sensed something like a warm breeze of love surrounding the praying man. A priest quietly called across the church, 'Brother - the Lord Jesus doesn't want you to bear this burden alone. You just keep quiet and we will pray for you.'

Person after person prayed until somebody broke into singing 'Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on them.' Then the congregation took it up singing it until one could almost sense God answering the prayer.

No one present that night would have been surprised when two weeks later the same man, with glowing face and great joy, told how he had gone home that night changed. He found a new beginning with his wife and the whole family was praising God together.

Another memorable night was a special healing service in the parish hall. Over two hundred people ringed the walls singing and praying quietly. In the middle half a dozen groups of three or four laid hands on and prayed with the sick who came for help. Each praying group, composed of different denominations, quietly prayed for the sick who came. Their prayers mingled with the prayers and singing from the sides of the hall. Children in pyjamas and dressing gowns played around the groups at prayer. It seemed like Bardon had merged with Capenaum of two thousand years ago.

Answered prayer

The results of those services remain unknown. Some examples indicate a little of the many blessings received.

A Dutchman who had been a resistance fighter in the war had been trapped under a bridge with an ammunition train on it during an allied bombing raid. Since then he had been unable to go under a railway bridge without extreme anxiety or panic. If a train did go overhead he would be filled with terror. He had been like that for thirty years. One Friday night at Bardon he was set free through prayer.

The following day he pulled up his car to check some business papers on his rounds. At first he had not noticed that he was under a railway bridge. Then the passage of trains overhead made him aware of where he was and that all fear had gone.

One night Vincent Hobbs, the parish priest, held a little, healthy, laughing 18 month old baby boy up before the congregation. 'Do you remember this little fellow?' he said. 'We prayed for him two weeks ago. The doctors confirm that he did have a tumour on the brain. They tell us that a miracle has occurred. The tumour had gone.'

I remember seeing the mother standing there with tears of joy streaming down her face as the congregation broke into applause and cheering of God. Then the people burst into singing praises of God.

So much more could be told: of many senior school boys converted after two science lessons and the daily prayer meetings that followed in that Catholic school; of a lay leader in the renewal giving a loving response when a hostile priest voiced noisy objections; of the delightful testimony of the young seminarian who was telling of the one by one conversions of his fellow students.

Books and cassettes sold at an enormous rate on those Friday nights. Stocks of Andrew Murray, David Wilkerson and David du Plessis sold out as well as Bibles.

Beginnings of revival

This renewal developed into a revival movement. Many prayer groups and renewal communities sprang from it. How did it start?

On the human level it was when Vincent Hobbs, Bardons's parish priest, read a book on the beginnings of Catholic charismatic renewal in America. In January 1970 he attended a retreat on spiritual renewal. The speaker told of things he had seen and heard in the renewal groups described in the book.

Vincent Hobbs invited the speaker to meet with people in the Bardons church who were interested in spiritual renewal. About 15-20 people attended that meeting on Friday 1 May. The discussion began to flop and it looked like nothing much would happen. Then the little group stood to sing a hymn and sat for spontaneous prayer. At that time there was a breakthrough. A spirit of unity became evident, a spirit which has never left the group. To use Welsey's phrase, their hearts were strangely warmed.

No charismatic phenomena were sought but these gradually appeared until they were regularly heard.

For this writer the whole situation poses strange questions. Theological problems remain. They may never be resolved. But what Jesus wants, as expressed in a Bardons theme song, is inescapable in its reality there:

'A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:35).

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Chapter 14

Renewal in a Regional Centre

I. Comment by Pastor Brian Francis, a Church of Christ minister

I was converted to Christ in my mid-thirties in a Baptist Church in Sydney. That experience was vital and life changing. I knew Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour in a personal way. My sins were forgiven. I was born again.

About six months later, however, I discovered the biblical experience of being baptised in the Spirit. It happened while I was seeking for the truth of the Trinity in answer to a challenge by a member of a sect who claimed that there was no such thing as the Trinity.

Having satisfied myself about the relationship of the Father with the Son, I was meditating on the position of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of things. I became deeply aware that the Holy Spirit was God here among us to indwell and empower the believer.

I remember saying, 'Lord, I want that.' Right there and then the Holy Spirit fell upon me. No words can describe it. That baptism in the Spirit was an experience I could not deny. I could never doubt it.

Shortly after that God called me to the ministry. My studies and my immediate objective pushed that new reality into the background of my life. It was not until 1978, while in ministry at Avenell Heights Church of Christ in Bundaberg, that I realised what God had given me at that time.

My pastoral ministry had been quite successful. I had a strong ministry of evangelism and teaching. However, it seemed as though there was something lacking in the lives of my converts and in the personal ministries of the people in my care.

At the beginning of 1978 I saw six young men accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Christ was real in their lives. I followed up with teaching on discipleship. Yet, within three months all three had drifted back into their old ways and were separated from the church.

I prayed a lot about that, seeking answers. One morning God spoke to me showing me my failure to exercise the ministry of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As I studied the scriptures the Lord centred my thoughts on Acts 19:5-7 and Paul's ministry there. Paul led people to Christ, baptised them in water, and then laid hands on them for them to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.

The simplicity of it all stood out for me. God said, 'Do what Paul did.'

Remarkable change

In opening myself afresh to the Holy Spirit and relying on the Spirit in ministry, I found a remarkable change taking place in my life as a minister.

I found inspiration I had not known before, liberty that I'd never experienced previously, greater power in my evangelistic ministry, and the work of ministry was a joy whereas many times it had been a drudge. In that one year 75 people were won to the Lord in our little church.

Though I continued to teach and instruct new Christians in discipleship, now I saw a spiritual strength in them that had not existed in converts previously. Baptism in the Spirit made a difference for them.

I have no doubt that the church in general has largely robbed itself of this blessing. We have missed the full extent of the fellowship of the Spirit in individual lives, and in the body of the church, because we have neglected this ministry.

Older Christians have also benefited. We prayed for many of them. They entered into a new experience of spiritual power and growth. They minister too. What a pleasure to be no longer apart as the minister and the congregation. We are co-workers and co-ministers for Christ because of the Spirit released in us all.

As the people of the church have opened themselves to the Holy Spirit's ministry, he has done wonderful things in their lives.

Many changes flow from the baptism in the Spirit:

- * One is a deep love for God's Word.
- * Another is a great interest in prayer and worship.
- * There is a new zeal for evangelism and the building of the church.

When you tie these three things with a caring ministry to people, you have the foundation for the use of the gifts of the Spirit in the bond of love. That is exactly what happened.

New ministries

Soon after I started praying for people to be baptised in the Spirit God began to do some remarkable things. Many sick people I visited and prayed for suddenly got well.

Then this ministry overflowed into the congregation. In our mid-week body ministry time people were miraculously healed in many ways. As well as sickness, personality problems were also healed. Healing of ppainful memories occured. Marriages were mended and improved. Communication barriers were broken down.

Initially, I did most of this ministry but it wasn't long before God began to release the Spirit's gifts among us all. Quite a few began exercising a healing ministry. Others were involved in counselling, preaching and teaching. God produced pastors, evangelists, teachers, and various other ministries. These people are not just trained personnel. They are God-gifted servants in their particular field of ministry. That's wonderful.

This began in 1978. We met in a little wooden ex-mission hut with a handful of people. Then we moved to a new brick building seating over 300. That was built entirely by voluntary labour. Our congregation grew.

The Lord continued to do remarkable things among us. There is much more to come. We are excited about that and give thanks to God.

II. Comment by Pastor David Blackmore, a Church of Christ minister.

The Avenell Heights Church of Christ is reaping the benefits of Pastor Brian Francis and his wife Barbara experiencing what is commonly called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They desired to see the people they served experience this renewal.

They walked a hard road. This Holy Spirit baptism was not widely accepted in the circles where they ministered. It was not generally seen as a valid experience in the Churches of Christ in Queensland at that time. But no one could deny the difference in their lives and ministry. No one could deny the healings experienced by folk as they called on God with a renewed faith and fresh vision.

Being people who were breaking new ground with God's Spirit, Brian and Barbara came under plenty of fire. Yet, they were determined to follow the revelation that God had given them. Consequently, today the church is vibrant, strong and enthusiastic about God.

Since Brian's retirement, I have pastored the church with my wife Jill. I was called out of the navy into full time ministry in 1985, first as assistant to Brian and then since 1988 as the pastor. One change from the usual pattern is that I was called without having done my time in Bible College. Instead, I am studying externally as I minister.

We employed a full time youth worker who is also relatively untrained. It seems that God is using our inexperience and naivety to release others into service.

I point out to people who expect me to do certain things because I am the pastor that they have had as much training as I have. They are just as capable as I am in many areas of ministry.

It is the Holy Spirit who ministers. All that God asks of us is to be available. The criteria for any ministry in our church is a call from God, willingness to obey him, and a desire to see Jesus glorified.

Effects of renewal

It is hard to identify what has been brought about by renewal and what would have happened anyway. However, as we look at other churches we do see some contrasts. These seem to be the result of renewal.

The most obvious difference, at least to the onlooker, is our worship. We don't often have manifestations of the Holy Spirit in speaking gifts such as prophecy or tongues, but there is a lot of freedom in the form of worship. We have retained the sermon (usually) and the Lord's Table as

focal points in our morning services. Outside of those two traditions we have great variety in our worship of God.

This variety is characterised by freedom to stand, sit or kneel as people desire. A worship leader will often encourage people to respond to God as they are led, not in a preconceived manner dictated by what is normal or uniform. Gone is the admonition, 'We will now stand and sing.'

Arms are often raised in worship. Some sit in silence. Others dance. Sometimes small groups will form in the pews as one or two minister to someone who obviously has a need. Meanwhile worship continues around them. At times people will walk to the front of the church indicating that they desire prayer. Others in the congregation will quietly come and pray with them.

In a church of approximately 150 adults there are up to 50 who would participate in some sort of public ministry over a two month period. It may be preaching, worship leading, music, singing, leading communion or offering an item.

Some others hardly ever make it to our services but are an important part of our fellowship. People in the church keep in touch with these others and find ways of helping or supporting them. Attendance is not a requirement for belonging.

All this is simply the outworking of what is in people's hearts. Renewal has come to individuals. It has affected our church because our church is made up of individuals.

Jesus said, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8). There is a witness to the power of God in manifestations of the Spirit. Mostly these are confined to one-on-one situations. A word of knowledge or wisdom is given in a caring context. Someone's friend is healed because she prayed for her at the dinner table. A mate at work is converted or baptised in the Spirit.

People change

The biggest work in people has not been the gifts of the Spirit but the fruit. We change.

One of the major changes is that we allow each other the right to be wrong. We have no desire to declare truth in a way that insists we have to be right. Most of us value our close fellowship and the oneness of spirit above having to be right. Of course we do try to speak the truth, and it really does seem to be in love (Ephesians 4:15).

The pastor, or anyone else for that matter, doesn't have to play spiritual police officer in someone else's life. That too is left to the Holy Spirit. Without the judgementalism that often accompanies being right, many people are finding themselves acceptable. They are free to change as God changes them.

This attitude flows over into ministry. As people find that they are acceptable they start to believe that their ministry, or what they have to contribute, may also be acceptable. So we have a large proportion of people who are doers, not just hearers.

Each person knows, or soon finds out, that if they have the vision they have the responsibility to do something about it. They are encouraged to minister in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit as vessels filled with the Spirit.

So we have all sorts of ministries and functions that spring from the congregation and are facilitated by the people. The pastor or board members only attend - if they want to. This frees the pastor and elders to do what God calls them to do rather than what people expect them to do.

We are determined to listen to the Holy Spirit, not just do what we've always done. So we are finding ways of ministering that are different from what we had envisaged or what our earlier traditions might have dictated.

There is an emphasis on personal evangelism instead of the traditional rally or mission. Special purpose groups form and disband as needs come and go. Outreaches into the community are more in a spirit of co-operation rather than as forays from the fortress.

We seem to have a real ministry of preparing people for service. Many people come to Christ, forge a relationship with the Lord in the Spirit's power, and then leave us for the service into which God calls them

Renewal in love

In some ways we might be a disappointment to those who come looking for a pentecostal type of experience. Instead of a great flow or obvious evidence of Holy Spirit power we seem to be almost traditional in how we do what we do. But there is one consistent testimony that we keep hearing from those that visit and end up staying: 'I couldn't escape the love that seemed almost tangible among you.'

Do not get the impression that renewal has come so there are no problems. It is just the opposite. Renewal brings with it problems that were never present prior to this special touch of the Holy Spirit. But they are problems of life and growth.

Something wonderful has happened in the hearts and minds of the people. So problems no longer seem to be a place where we get stuck. They are a place where we draw deeper into God. We look for God's solutions.

The day is coming, and may well be here, when the words of James 1:2, 'Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of all kinds,' become words we say without tongue in cheek.

Renewal at Avenell Heights Church of Christ has come sometimes strongly, sometimes ever so gently. It's good to look back and see what God has done. It is better to look forward to what lies ahead.

Renewal is not a once for all event in individuals or in a church. Tomorrow we cover fresh ground in Christ. We move on.

Pray that today's generation, renewed in the Spirit, doesn't become tomorrow's traditionalists locked into what God did yesterday. Renewal remains an on-going choice. We pray that everyone will choose to allow God to renew them each day.

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Chapter 15

Renewal in a Small Assembly

Bob Dakers

Mr Bob Dakers wrote this chapter as chairman of the elders of Springwood Christian Fellowship (now River of Life church), in co-operation with the other elders. It is reprinted by permission from the November 1990 issue of 'New Day', P O Box 564, Plympton, South Australia 5038.

Springwood Christian Fellowship is a Brethren Assembly located to the south of Brisbane, Queensland.

It was established along traditional Brethren lines in the mid 1970's. That meant an all male eldership, worship with unaccompanied singing on Sunday mornings, a Gospel service in the evening and a mid-week Bible study evening.

Evangelism was a priority, with door-to-door visiting. A Sunday School and youth work were established. Membership at that time was 30-40 believers.

Then in the 1980's a move of the Spirit saw large Pentecostal and charismatic churches set up in the area. Inevitably these churches began to affect our little Brethren Assembly.

We had discussions on healing, baptism in the Spirit, tongues, vibrant worship and the role of women in the church. The eldership of the church tried to be open in a sincere effort to balance practice with scripture.

Looking back, the present elders have a wry smile about that openness. 'We decided that women could pray in the meetings and ask that a hymn be sung - but they could not give thanks for the bread and the cup at communion. Couples were allowed the freedom to decide whether the wife should cover her head in the morning meetings!'

Breakthrough

The start of a breakthrough came with an important sermon by the church's leading Bible teacher who said that tongues 'could be for today - if God so desired'. It seems he did so desire, because different members of the church began to experience the Holy Spirit at work in their lives.

We also decided that it was acceptable to raise one's hands, to clap and dance - not because other churches did so, but because scripture suggested it. Unfortunately, all this was too much for some who left the fellowship. But God brought many others in their place.

Our eldership makes an important observation: 'Spiritual renewal is more than noise, tongues, and hands raised. If that is all we saw God do, then we would have to admit the results would have barely been worth the tears, disappointments and loss of members. But God has taken us on. We

have seen new areas of counselling develop. Spiritual release, joy and forgiveness have come to burdened hearts.'

A significant area of change has come in the attitude towards the role of women. Traditionally, Brethren women cannot pray aloud in church, preach or teach, or have a public leadership role.

Royree Jensen, a woman who is part of the church leadership, says, 'It came as quite a revelation to us that our traditional interpretation of scripture regarding the role of women might not be the only one, and might also be incorrect.'

'We now believe that the redemptive work of Jesus at Calvary includes restoring men and women to the relationship God had intended in the beginning. At creation, man and woman were created equal, though with different roles.'

'If God gives gifts to women, then we should not argue with God but encourage the women to use their gifts - God's gifts to the church. We are to discern the spirit, not check the sex!'

'So all areas of ministry - teaching, worship leading, evangelism, leadership - are open to both sexes, if they are so gifted.'

Mission

Springwood Christian Fellowship emphasises the role of home groups for nurture and ministry. Around 80% of members are involved with a home group. There has also been an emphasis on mission work.

We found the response of a spiritually renewed and healed person was a deep desire to serve. We take teams for a short term visits into Asia as one way of giving opportunity for service and exposure to missions. A quarter of our members have so far been part of teams to India, Philippines, or Papua New Guinea, while individuals have also gone to Thailand and Borneo. We work with local churches.

Springwood currently supports five full time missionaries and has begun a missionary school to prepare people for mission work.

Looking back on the path God has led us, the leadership observes that beyond all other things, God has shown himself fresh and new. 'Morning by morning new mercies we see!' A charismatic rut is as deep and dull as a traditional Brethren rut. We long to be open and experience all the new manna God has for us.

Rather than forsake all of our traditions, we have grown to appreciate many of them more. We appreciate the strengths of the plurality of leaders (elders), as well as its many weaknesses, the paramount need for unity in leadership, the love and respect for the Word of God but with new light given by the Spirit of God, the depth of the significance of communion, the heights of praise and worship, and the strength and power of a strong and healthy church family.

Where will our pilgrimage lead? We have always felt that many assembly folk long for a deeper reality in God - to know the power Jesus promised and the comfort of the Spirit of God. We find that some assemblies are open to renewal, but nervous of an unknown path. We have walked it, made

mistakes, laughed a bit, cried a lot, and are willing to offer assistance and advice if it is requested.

We are looking at ways to reach a lost world with practical Christian love and assistance - not just to see converts, but to love as Jesus Christ loved. Some of these areas of mission and service are underway now as we find opportunity to help people.

Our message to leaders of other assemblies is simple: Don't be afraid. Open your hearts and hear what the Spirit is saying to you. Discuss what is "the tradition of the assemblies" and what is the mind of the Spirit. Often the two are not the same.

Realise that your people look to you to lead them into green pastures - not starve them in dustbowls of legalism and tradition. This is a great responsibility. It is a good thing, as Paul says (2 Timothy 1:14). 'Be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you'.

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Chapter 16

Renewal in a Large Congregation

Geoff Waugh

The Rev. Dr Geoff Waugh wrote as a member of Gateway Baptist Church, and editor of the Renewal Journal.

'We are middle-of-the-road charismatic, open to all the gifts of the Spirit,' says Brian Andrew.

He's the unassuming and firm senior pastor of Gateway Baptist Church (formerly Holland Park Baptist Church) in suburban Brisbane. That church grew from a typical suburban congregation of 150-200 in 1984 when Brian arrived to over 1,000 five years later. In the seven years to 1991 there were 1,000 conversions recorded, 450 baptisms, and weekly offerings had increased from \$1,000 to over \$13,000.

By the end of 1985 Sunday services had moved into a high school hall. Then in 1989 the church bought 35 hectares of bushland near the Gateway bypass road to house the Gateway Centre, it's new home. By the nineties a pastoral team of eight took care of the steadily expanding ministries including 40 home and ministry groups, over a dozen full time voluntary interns in leadership training, congregational training courses for a variety of ministries, church planting in Queensland and inter-state, and overseas missionary support including church members working in the slums of Asia. 'Our country has a European heritage with an Asian destiny,' declares Brian.

This practical young visionary is a strong team leader committed to the ministry of the whole body of Christ. Everyone ministers. Much of what happens at Gateway can happen in your church. Indeed, hundreds of visitors to the church have begun applying these principles in their own churches.

The Lord gave Brian a prophetic word for the church as it began to grow in numbers: 'I will do a great thing for my glory is upon you. You will be a light in this city, in the nation and in the nations of the world.'

Brian had been converted at 18 through a surfing mate in New Zealand. Following Bible College study he was soon using his carpentry skills in voluntary mission work in Papua New Guinea.

As a young married couple, Brian and Moira his wife developed their leadership skills with World Vision in New Zealand and in Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in America and Great Britain. They then worked on the pastoral team at the rapidly growing Spreydon Baptist Church in Christchurch. The insights and experience they gained shaped their ministry in Brisbane.

Sunday celebration

You get the feel of that ministry when you visit a Gateway church service. It's the church's Sunday celebration.

All ages attend all services but families with prams and story books abound in the mornings, and young people bound in at night. It is a celebration. Relaxed, informal and expectant.

The ushers greet you at the door with a bulletin, their first name clearly visible on their name tags. People mill around. Friends greet one another.

You find a seat and scan the bulletin. The front page tells you who's preaching on what, and that you are welcome at a home group during the week. Brian's pastoral 'Words on the Way' come on page 2. That can alert you to what is in the sermon. You skim through the many notices concerning coming events and church family news. Area pastors' phone numbers are listed on the back, your point of contact if you need one.

The bulletin includes a tear-off section on which people can note changes to their name, address, phone number or home group. That helps to keep the computer's directory up to date each week. The Care Card reverse side of this slip invites you to note needs for prayer or pastoral action for yourself or for others.

By now the musicians and singing team rostered on that day have begun playing and singing, preparing people for worship. Then at starting time Robert Colman, or one of the other worship leaders, cordially involves everyone in praise and worship.

Early in the service you will be invited to talk with those near you. This greeting time helps you relate to those close by, or with others you want to see for a minute to two. In such a large church you are always meeting someone new. Even old timers (who've been around for over two years) can be greeted as though they were visitors that day.

After greetings, worship continues. The order of service has been carefully prepared, with copies for everyone involved in leadership: pastors, singers, musicians, sound mixers, and the overhead projectionist. The worship leader follows this but seeks to remain open and sensitive to the Spirit's leading. Sometimes people from the congregation will have a word or song from the Lord. If so, they check this out with one of the pastoral team who is available at the front. Then at an appropriate time they may go to the microphone to give what they have received.

During the service visitors are greeted, invited to take a letter of welcome and visitors' card, and to fill in the card ready to place it in the pots during the offering. It's a church worth visiting. Thousands have.

Brian usually gives the announcements. If someone else is preaching, as often happens, he also participates in leading worship. Often he preaches only once on a Sunday, involving different pastors or preachers in other services.

If you come to the morning service which is filled with families you will see that during the offering the children and their leaders move out for King's Kids activities. You can't miss it. It's quite a lively time!

Kids wave goodbye to parents. Ushers collect a colourful mixture of visitors' cards, tear-off bulletin slips, cash, and envelopes for specific giving including missionary support. People remain seated while

singing until the activity subsides, then stand to conclude the song or hymn in a more traditional fashion.

New and old

You'll notice a creative blending of the new and the old in the service: choruses and hymns; announcements combined with comments by others; prayer up front with new members, new home group pastors, couples to be married, or dedication of babies; prayer and singing woven together as planned yet at times adapted or changed according to need; creative ministries in drama or dance; people worshipping freely without manipulation, some sitting, some standing.

The sermon or message may be accompanied by overhead projected summaries or illustrations. Opportunity is given to respond for prayer at the front with pastors or leaders who are trained and available to pray with anyone about any need: conversion, repentance, being filled with the Spirit, release of spiritual gifts, healings, quiet counselling, and sometimes referral to a pastor for follow-on care or ministry.

Occasionally you may be encouraged to pray together in clusters with those near you. Some people balk at that, but no one is compelled to pray aloud. You can just listen or mention anything you would like your cluster to pray about. Others may jump into this ministry time with enthusiasm, expecting the Lord to touch people with his Spirit in healing, or release, or renewal. He often does.

The mood is relaxed. Friendly. Hype is out. Love is emphasised. The atmosphere of acceptance allows for innovation and freedom. Two hours pass quickly.

Soon you are moving about and talking with people after the service. You can check out the wide range of activities on display - literature, addresses for home groups, notices for each pastoral area, cassette tapes of the sermon, details of coming events, and friendly help from people on roster there.

Newcomers are sometimes surprised that a denominational church can be so different, so alive, so creative! Of course, hundreds of churches in Australia now tell a similar story.

Week days

During the week you will probably get a letter acknowledging your visit to the church and inviting you to get in touch if you want more information or need a spiritual home. If you live in Brisbane you may also get a phone call from someone in a home group near you, offering information or help if you want it.

You realise that the office system is working well, and quickly. You're right. On Monday, the cards and tear-off slips are sorted and information filed. Office staff or volunteers contact people with details they can act on, like phoning you.

If you already belong to another church, you'll be encouraged to be actively involved there, sharing with your church any ideas you have found helpful. If you want to talk further, your caller may suggest you get together sometime, perhaps for morning or afternoon tea. Many do.

You'll discover that home groups and various interest groups meet during the week. These groups may be musicians, creative ministry teams, singles, young marrieds, children's ministry teachers, women's groups, vocational groups and other areas of mutual interest.

Church business issues are discussed and prayed through in the home groups and interest groups. So at the quarterly business meetings the elders' recommendations are usually passed with a huge majority or unanimously. They have already been worked through in the groups.

Time can be spent at the business meetings in worship and in sharing testimonies because discussion has already been completed over many weeks in the home groups and interest groups. A young man was converted at one of the Annual General Meetings through the worship and testimonies!

Home groups

If you're interested in attending a home group you can just turn up at one of the addresses on the list. Your friends or the caller from the church may invite you. Most home groups meet on Wednesday nights, but some meet during the day or on other nights.

When you go to a home group, perhaps just to check it out at first, you find a fairly average bunch of people who make you welcome. You meet on a first name basis. There may be ten to twenty of them, more or less.

They usually worship for a while, using a guitar, or a piano, or just their voices. They pray. The home group pastor, as the group leaders are called, or a cell leader may introduce the topic for sharing in cells, based on Brian's sermon the previous Sunday.

The notes and study guide for Brian's sermon are used by the home groups during the week. Home group pastors use those notes and have responsibility for the pastoral care of their group.

The group may then move into small cells of three to six. There you talk, share needs, and pray together. If you have anything you would like people to pray about, your cell group will do that. You soon realise that the prayers are very specific, often with hands laid on the person being prayed for. The Holy Spirit meets many needs this way.

Prayer is vital. The church emphasises the need to pray - personally, with friends, in cell groups or home groups, and in church services. So prayer is an important part of the home group. Later you may gather for closing worship and perhaps some supper.

If you decide you want to belong to the group you just keep coming. By the third week you will be given an information sheet to fill in for the computer records in the church office. Your name is recorded as part of that home group. That group then has responsibility for your pastoral care. Those are probably the people in the church you will get to know best and look forward to meeting again on Sundays.

You'll notice the strong focus on home groups in the church life. The bulletin, announcements, and activities all emphasise their importance. Home group pastors are publicly commissioned, interview people for membership, baptise members of their group in church services, and stand

up front with people in their group who are welcomed into church membership.

You soon realise that the home groups are the primary nurture, training and outreach groups in the church. That's where people are supported and challenged. That's where cell group leaders learn on the job, some of them becoming home group pastors later on if the group grows and multiplies. That's where you can bring your friends.

They don't all function perfectly. Few do! Abilities, gifting and time available for preparation and pastoral care vary considerably. Area pastors, on the full time pastoral team, supervise the groups in their area.

Home group pastors serve voluntarily. They meet each month with the church's pastoral team for information, inspiration and training. Each one will have previously completed basic congregational training courses as well as a course on home group leadership.

Many ministries

Soon you realise there is much more available than you realised at first. A big church can offer many ministries.

Some people join interest groups or age groups. One young adults' group organises relief for the poor. At Christmas, 1990, they helped distribute two tonnes of donated mutton and a couple of thousand dollars of other provisions to poor or unemployed Brisbane people.

Children meet in King's Kids on Sundays and at special events and family outings. Youth and young adults meet for a range of activities and outreach. Teams witness in many ways including door-to-door, offering help.

Training courses are offered on many nights covering topics such as Foundations (for new Christians or members), Personal Ministry Development, Bethel Bible studies, Home Group Leadership, Personal Counselling, Prayer Ministries, Creative Ministries, Urban Mission, Lifestyle Evangelism, Family Ministries, Missionary Interest, and Church Planting.

Some specialist ministries include doctors and counsellors offering their skills with faith and prayer, prayer for inner healing or prayer counselling, half-way houses, and some experiments in community houses for discipleship or support of some people.

Gateway interns, involved in full time voluntary service, study at the Gateway College. Many of these graduates have already moved into pioneering ministries among the poor overseas, in various cross-cultural missions, and in renewal churches in Australia.

How does it all happen? The same way it does in any small church, but on a larger scale. Committed people minister in specific areas. The church office handles the administration. Pastors have responsibility for various activities, primarily to support and encourage others in their ministries.

Before Brian came the church had been without a full time pastor. Jim Miller, a retired businessman, gave his time voluntarily in

administration. He had a vision for church growth. Later, as the church grew, he was added to the pastoral staff to minister in administration. Growth in numbers and finance enabled others to be added to the full time pastoral and office staff as needed.

You can apply many of these ideas in your own church. Small and large churches can become more effective in ministry as they use these principles of church life and growth in the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Renewal in the church and revival in the land will see many hundreds of churches ministering effectively in many of these ways. It can happen in any denomination, in any church. It is part of what God is doing as we humble ourselves, pray, seek God's approval and turn from our sin. Then God can answer our prayers, forgive our sin, and heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Our humble repentance, earnest prayer, sincere forgiveness of one another, and sacrificial service for others can unleash the Spirit's dynamic in our lives and churches. We can learn to respond to the Lord and do what he says in the power of his Spirit. Then the flames of renewal in the church may burst into the fires of revival in the land.

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CHURCH RENEWAL: OBSERVATIONS

Chapter 17 Building with God

Barry Chant

Dr Barry Chant is a Christian Revival Crusade minister and the Founder and President of the House of Tabor in Adelaide. His books include 'Heart of Fire', a history of Pentecostalism in Australia.

'The only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn anything from history,' a cynic once said.

As with most comments like that, it has enough truth in it to hurt and enough error for us to breathe the occasional sigh of relief when we come across an exception.

However, those who do learn from history don't make the same mistakes and therefore we may not hear much about them. Encouraged by this, I want to comment on lessons we can learn from the past and the present in building with God today.

God's man or woman

New and creative moves of the Spirit of God usually have a man or woman in the vanguard. These are people with the light of vision in their eyes, the sound of authority in their step, the stance of purpose in their shoulders and the beat of God in their heart.

Organisations tend to follow in the wake of revival. They don't produce it. This principle is seen in scripture and well established in history.

The ascended Christ gave gifts to the church so that it might be built up, strengthened and brought to maturity. These gifts are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

The apostles themselves are Christ's gifts. So too the prophets. Or the evangelists. It is not that Christ gives to such people the gift of being an apostle or prophet or pastor. The persons themselves are the gifts to the church.

When we look at the history of the Pentecostal movement in Australia, for instance, we see it almost every time. The earliest pioneer of aggressive belief in the supernatural power of God in this country was John Alexander Dowie. He was a man of faith and vision who dared to attempt great things for God. He built big churches here in Australia and managed to establish a whole city in the United States.

We find a similar pattern with later Pentecostal groups. Good News Hall was commenced by Janet Lancaster in 1909, the Southern Evangelical Mission by Robert Horne in 1911, the Pentecostal Church of Australia by C L Greenwood and A C Valdez in 1925, the Foursquare Churches by Fred Van Eyk in 1929, the Apostolic Church by William Cathcart in 1929, the Christian Revival Crusade by Leo Harris in 1945, and so on.

This does not say that the Pentecostal movement is the work of people. It could not be. It does say, however, that the Spirit of God chooses a man or a woman who will do what he wants done. So an Isaiah says, 'Here I am. Send me.' Or a Samuel replies, 'Speak for your servant is listening.' Then the Spirit begins to act through them.

Nor is that choice on the basis of obvious talent or even of spirituality or dedication. This shows the mystery of God's plan. He does not always choose the mighty, or the noble, or the great, or even those who pray the most or live the most holy lives. He chooses those he can use simply because he wants to use them. Where we might select an Esau he will choose a Jacob.

Many a frustrated or struggling minister could be much relieved by understanding this. I do not say that we should not pray or live holy lives. Of course we should. But that is not necessarily the reason for successful or epoch-making ministries. God, after all, is sovereign.

This should not discourage anyone. Rather the opposite. It can encourage us to be ourselves and to do what God has given us to do, great or small.

Boldness

We could argue that having said that, there is nothing more to say. Not so! We can learn from the bold exploits of God's servants.

Boldness does seem to be a characteristic of pioneers. The charismatic Dowie, for example, showed incredible daring. His years in Melbourne, 1882-1888, were probably best known for his fearless street marches and outspoken attacks on the liquor industry. He was utterly unafraid to face magistrate, police, or thug.

When in 1925 Valdez so stirred some of his critics they organised a protest meeting, he himself attended the meeting and sat in the front row. He asked permission to speak, and did so.

Van Eyk also showed extraordinary boldness. Finding himself in the midst of a miners' strike meeting in Cessnock in 1929 he promptly sent a note to the platform asking to be listed as a speaker. When his request was granted he turned it into the first of his campaign meetings in that city.

So we could go on. Those who would achieve something great for God must be men and women of courage.

What is this gift of boldness? It is being willing to leave the safe path and break new ground. It is being prepared to fail if God so wills, but at least reaching out in the process. It is attempting what others have not attempted before. It is treading into the unknown, risking the quicksand and trusting God for the solid rock.

The very boldness of these people I have mentioned led some of them into trouble. Dowie finished up in shame and disgrace, dismissed from leadership by those who had once served him best. Van Eyk was asked to leave the country by men whose hearts were broken with disappointment that one they had esteemed so highly had failed them so badly.

What went wrong? The simplest explanation is given by Paul when he wrote that we have this treasure in jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7). Sometimes the clay jars crack and break under the weight of the trust given them.

So there are dangers in boldness, as in any ministry of faith. We must always be careful when we think we stand lest in fact we fall. We must, however, also avoid taking the safe way of sitting in the boat when Jesus calls us to walk on the water.

Teamwork

The idea that there is strength in numbers is not new. It does, though, provide a balance to individual boldness.

Initiatives nearly always come from one person, someone of vision, boldness, creativity and faith. Such people need a team they can gather round them and fully utilise to complete the task they have begun.

Leo Harris (1920-1977), founder of the Christian Revival Crusade, developed this concept of teamwork. It featured prominently in his teaching, preaching and writing. Dedicated teamwork was one of his basic principles.

Harris saw that sharing leadership did not diminish it, but strengthened it. This is another lesson we need to learn if we are to see local churches and Christian organisations forge ahead.

Many churches are not growing because their leaders, and often their members, will not delegate or work with a team. Churches with a membership of about 60 to 100 often never grow any bigger. This is because such a church can be managed by one pastor. One reason for the lack of growth may be that to grow any bigger the church needs multiple leadership. That may be seen as a threat.

We hesitate to share leadership with others for one of two reasons. Either we are afraid that someone else will not do what needs to be done as well as we can, or we are afraid they will do it better.

This applies to members also. The organist, or the secretary, or the person who arranges flowers, may not want the church to grow. If it does someone else might come who can do better than they can so their position will be threatened. Or, because of increased numbers the task will have to be shared and it might not be done so well.

One significant example of shared leadership in an Australian church took place unheralded and virtually unknown. Ray Bettcher pioneered a youth group which slowly began to turn into a church. Over 50 people attended regular Sunday meetings. Ray took some long service leave and worked full time in the church for three months. He then realised he had taken the fledgling church as far as he could. So instead of resigning his job to try and make a go of the church on his own, he went back to his job. He invited Bill Vasilakis, a man younger than himself, to take over the

pastorate while he continued on as assistant pastor. In two years the church grew to about 150 people with a strong team. Now it is one of South Australia's strongest churches with hundreds attending. Dedicated unity and a strong team achieved far more than one man in isolation.

Supernatural ministry

We live in a time when there is unprecedented activity of the Holy Spirit in the world. Never have so many people used spiritual gifts as now. Never have so many churches been open to the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

While many factors contribute to church growth, the unfettered presence of the Spirit is a major one. The last words Jesus said to his disciples were about waiting until the Spirit came upon them before they attempted any evangelism (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8).

Australian church life indicates the value of this approach. Whether we agree with their doctrine or not, the fact is that pentecostals and charismatics emphasise being sensitive to the Spirit and give great scope to the gifts of the Spirit. Many of their churches now grow at an exciting rate.

When the Holy Spirit is given his rightful place as the One who brings life and vigour, churches come alive.

There are dangers, of course. Whenever God is at work, the enemy will be at work too. The Lord clearly warned us about this (Matthew 7:21-23; 24:24). We can expect counterfeits and deception and just plain mistakes. It is important, however, not to toss out the baby with the bathwater. To totally reject the supernatural work of the Spirit because of excesses or follies may be worse than committing the excesses.

Paul teaches us clearly that the church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 12:27). If we take the word body literally, this means that the church is the equivalent of the physical presence of Christ. That is, each local church should be to the community what Christ would be if he were physically present.

What a staggering concept! The only way it can happen is through the presence of the Spirit. We need the fruit of the Spirit to show the love of Christ. We need the gifts of the Spirit to show the power of Christ.

God has set in the church apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, gifts of healing, helpers, administrators, tongues speakers and so on (1 Corinthians 12:28). Such people have been put in the church by God himself. He has appointed them.

Failure to recognise these people or to allow them scope to function is failure to allow God to achieve through the church what he wants to achieve. Since God's purposes are always fulfilled one way or another, he will still realise his plan. We may miss it. Many people will be frustrated if locked into systems that clamp their gifts and hinder their calling.

Only when churches allow gifts of the Spirit to be fully used will they really grow as God intends.

The whole spectrum

As humans we have such limited vision. We see little of what God sees. Like horses with blinkers we perceive just the narrow path before us instead of the whole spectrum of the kingdom of God.

Renewal in Australia has been particularly afflicted in this way. The first three Pentecostal churches in this country would not talk to each other, for example. They all thought they had all the truth and the others had a deficient variety. From the beginning the movement was marked with disunity.

This frame of mind has afflicted many churches since. They have a genuine experience of the Spirit but a small vision in understanding what the Spirit is able to do.

Many factors in church life contribute to successful and healthy growth. Some of these are sound exposition of Scripture, prayer, praise and worship, the Lord's supper, fellowship, teamwork, gifts of the Spirit, boldness of vision, evangelism, service and leadership.

Most of us find it hard to embrace all of these at one time. We tend to major on one or the other, to our own loss.

Even if we cannot seem to grasp all that we need to, we can at least be tolerant enough to allow others their different strengths and emphases. This means that we must add one other factor to our list, the most important factor of all. Love.

Only through love can we have the breadth of vision that enables us to grasp the whole counsel of God. Then we shall have a valid standard by which to measure things. So success is measured not in terms of how big the church or how many miracles occur but in terms of how much the true character of Christ is revealed. Love is the measure of greatness.

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Chapter 18

The Cost of Renewal

Hamish Jamieson

The Rt. Rev. Hamish Jamieson wrote as the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Bunbury in Western Australia.

Expect mess, for it cannot be avoided. When a Christian is operating in the power of the Holy Spirit there will be fall-out or repercussions.

There are many reasons for this. Some have a misconception of what it is all about. Others react because of a feeling of inferiority, or they perceive a sense of superiority in those who claim to be 'in the Spirit.'

When God is actively present in love and power, we react at many levels. It is the classic clash of light and darkness, life and death, good and evil, holiness and sin.

Such mess can have two aspects to it. There can be a holy mess where people are convicted and compelled to get cleaned up. This is good, healthy and right. Equally, there can be unholy messes where there is a decisive NO to the activity of the Holy Spirit, a rejection of God's purposes, and a spirit of divisiveness. This is destructive.

Jesus found exactly the same sort of thing in his own short ministry. It wasn't nice and neat or peaceful and orderly at all. Jesus told us that there would be division, even in families (Matthew 10:34-39).

So if and when this happens, a leader must be humble before the Lord. Leaders need to ensure that it is the power of the gospel that is causing strife, not them. We should avoid confrontation between leader and people and, instead, allow a confrontation with Jesus.

Any renewing movement, any change, comes about when the people recognise there is a need to change. Then they too, not just the leader, are convinced by the Holy Spirit that something needs to happen. Much damage is done when a leader acts in a solo capacity, or moves ahead without this work of God in the people.

Costly renewal

I have started in this way simply to emphasise that there is a cost to be paid in renewal. We must not be deluded into thinking it is easy. The New Testament is full of the cost. It affects us. We are part of it. Yet, in stating this, other important aspects emerge immediately.

The first is that God is a reality. He is not just a vague hope or a dusty figure in an equally dusty book. God is not a remote something out there somewhere. He is a personal reality who can be grasped and known, who wants to grasp and know us: 'You did not choose me but I chose you' (John 15:16). All the persons of the Holy Trinity are real. We know the Father through his love. We know the Son in his redeeming work. We know the Holy Spirit in his activity and power.

Secondly, God is someone present with his people in their worship, prayer and ministry. He enjoys our praises of him. He delights in our prayers. He rejoices when his Son is accepted as Lord and King, and when we repent of our sins. He is pleased when we take hold of his Holy Spirit so that he can minister to his people.

Thirdly, we expect God to do things. We don't worship a passive, but an active, God. The Bible overflows with such a God. God still acts. 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8).

The Holy Spirit, therefore, fills the people of God with a sense of excitement and expectation. God the Holy Spirit can and does move with power among his people at a normal Sunday service. Then it is plain that something is going on!

The level of expectancy in the average congregation is mostly low. This is quickly heightened when the Holy Spirit begins, and is allowed, to move. People's unbelief then turns into belief. They look forward to what God will do next.

This cannot be contrived nor stage-managed. The Holy Spirit moves among us. As we gather together we can expect it to happen.

Take God seriously

The Christian life begins with commitment and repentance. These two ingredients are absolutely necessary if we are to take God seriously. 'The kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news' (Mark 1:15).

The Christian gospel is about salvation. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith' (Romans 1:16). Just as we take God seriously so we must also take sin seriously and deal with it in our lives. Jesus has already done that for us on the cross and in the resurrection. We need to take hold of it by faith.

We begin with commitment and repentance, then we continue in the love and power of the Holy Spirit. That was the promise of Jesus, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you' (Acts 1:8). It was the reality of Pentecost (Acts 2). It is the promise for us today as well, 'For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him' (Acts 2:39).

For years the rational has captured and disembowelled the church. We subject God and his activity to the criteria of our own thinking. We say, 'If it is not plausible then it cannot happen.' We place this unbelief under the guise of theology, but it is a theology that uses the tools of fallen humanity to gain credibility. In practice, it loses respect.

The result is that the supernatural is discarded. The church ends up with a gospel which is empty of both content and power, 'holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power' (2 Timothy 3:5).

Consequently, our society, and even many in the church, are rejecting such a powerless gospel and looking for the reality of God elsewhere. It is often said that people still trust Jesus but have rejected his church.

The captivity of the church's theology by scientific method is part of the reason.

Let us take God seriously. If we do, we then allow Jesus to be the head of his body, the church, once again (Colossians 1:18). We listen to what he is saying. We follow his agendas. We do what he wants of us. We are obedient in doing his will.

God's kingdom is where his will is carried out. We pray that in the Lord's Prayer. Let us live it. That is a far cry from the method of trying to find God's will through a democratic vote!

When we take God seriously we must take the Holy Spirit seriously. Some Christians live and work in their own strength and depend upon their own resources and own experience and skills. That sort of life or ministry soon begins to go flat and may disintegrate.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be our advocate and helper: 'You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you' (John 14:17).

Our foundations

St Paul encourages us to see that the church, the body of Christ, is 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone' (Ephesians 2:20).

The renewal of the church means that we look at our foundations and do some extensive reworking as needed. If our foundation is inadequate then it will not sustain what is being built upon it. Renewal forces us to make such a re-appraisal.

Let us look at the foundations of the church as a whole, but also of our own local church. This would be a fascinating topic for discussion in the local congregation. We cannot assume that because the foundation was sound at one time, it still is. We must discover our foundation for ourselves and, if necessary, get it right.

What are our foundations? On what are we built? Why do we have a church? What is our expectation of it? What criteria are used for membership? What do we expect to do as Christ's body? That would be enough to start with.

Firstly, we are a Christ-centred church. Jesus is the cornerstone. We are to 'strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness' (Matthew 6:33). Nothing less than this will do. Take Christ out of the church and you have no church. It will collapse into a heap of rubble.

There have been many attacks upon this foundation both from within and outside the church. Jesus is denigrated and placed within a pantheon of gods. Some deny that he is the Son of God. It will not do. There are many gospels but only one that is true, 'that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Secondly, the church is also built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. On one level this is a reference to our historical foundations. It is equally true that unless that Christ-centred foundation is reinforced by the apostles and prophets in our own generation, we will be on shifting sands.

This double foundation of apostles and prophets is one of solid teaching, tradition, structures and the institution on the one hand, and on the other of the charismatic, of the word of God which is 'living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword' (Hebrews 4:12), which stirs and agitates, which is fluid and flexible.

Both these streams are seen in the Bible. Both come into constant tension. History has taken us very much into the area of the institutional which seems to have the predilection of absorbing and quashing the charismatic or prophetic.

Both the apostolic and prophetic are necessary. From time to time God sends his Spirit and stirs up his church so that the correct balance and tension exist again. We are living in such a time now.

God is shaking and pushing his church in the direction of the prophetic. Some resist the movement of his Spirit and cling on to what was. Others fling everything to one side, getting rid of what was. That is the Corinthian church all over again; an independence gone mad.

God asks us to be built upon both the apostles and prophets. We do not want to jettison all that is good and right in our tradition. We do want to hear and discern what the Spirit is saying to the churches. We do not want to be weighed down by a tradition that doesn't allow us to move, but we need to interpret what the Spirit is saying in the light of scripture and in comparison with our experiences of the past.

We want the Spirit of the living God to breathe new life into the institution without us destroying it by our exuberance or wildness. We don't want to prop up something for its own sake, but at the same time we don't want to destroy what is good, healthy, right and of value in God's sight.

Our task is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus with great power and conviction. We want to see people's lives come under the saving grace of Jesus, to be given life, love and hope. We have a message of hope for our sick world, our corrupt nation, and our immoral community.

A holy temple

Upon these foundations with Christ as the cornerstone 'the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord,' a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22).

Aspects of our lives together in this holy temple will clearly be affected.

Worship will be important. The community of faith will come together for the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42), which will include praise. Without such worship we cease to be the church. But the worship we offer must be acceptable to God. The Holy Spirit will direct our worship. The structures and tradition of our liturgy will contain a flexibility which allows us to flow with the Holy Spirit. Our God wants us to worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Here is that tension again.

Mission flows from our relationship with and our worship of God. This mission is to announce God's kingdom and proclaim the good news. It is a

mission to those who do not know Jesus. It is a mission to our nation. We must speak with a prophetic voice if they are to hear. It is a mission to the church so that we will never forsake our first love (Revelation 2:4).

The evangelisation of our community, our nation and our world will be on the top of our priority list. As with the first apostles, the Holy Spirit unloosens tongues and gives courage and boldness. We witness most effectively to Jesus and share the good news with impact when it is done in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Ministry is now being seen more clearly as the time when God interacts with a person, mostly through someone else. When we minister to one another we are acting as the people through whom God operates. When our foundations are right, the task of ministry is seen as belonging to every Christian. The ordained leadership enables this to happen. A discipleship or apprenticeship model for such equipping would appear to be the most appropriate.

Prayer will again become a vital part of people's lives and of the church. The Holy Spirit encourages us to pray, helping us in our weakness (Romans 8:26). Prayer is both apostolic and prophetic. There is the formal prayer of the church which provides the stability, the rock of our foundation. There is also individual and group prayer. We are being called into very solid commitments to pray, to intercede, and to fast. God's presence, love, mercy and power are released as we persevere in prayer.

Scripture is vital. A desire to be fed with solid food, to read the scriptures and not be satisfied with 'a few words at the morning service' will flow from a right foundation.

Finally, there will be a yearning to minister to the poor and needy of our society, to reach out with the hands of Jesus and the heart of Jesus. Yes, the Spirit is speaking to the church: 'Re-examine your foundations.'

The presence of God

As we take God seriously so we must also take what he promises seriously. We can expect the Lord to be with us: 'I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matthew 28:20). We do have a personal relationship with the Father: 'When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (Romans 8:15-16). We can expect the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). We are friends of Jesus as we do the will of the Father (John 15:14).

So often this element, this appreciation of God, recedes into the background in the working out of our lives as Christians. We somehow forget that our task is to carry out the Father's purposes for his world, and not our own.

We cannot assume that what we decide upon is the will of God. Our task is to listen to God, to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church, and then do it.

The government of our church, and the way we operate as individual Christians, does not always reflect this truth. Charismatic renewal is helping and encouraging us to grasp it again. As we do so, the church of

the risen Lord will become more and more God's agency in the advancement of the kingdom of God.

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Chapter 19

Charismatic Renewal in the Roman Catholic Church

Tom White

The Rev. Tom White wrote as a Roman Catholic priest and former Director of the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Sydney.

A delicate balance between structure and charism has been important to the whole church throughout the two thousand years of its history. Whenever that balance is upset one way or the other there is need for renewal.

Jesus gave his church both structure and charism. He trained the apostles, made Peter their leader, and sent them out to bring his good news to the world. Only a matter of days later he sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to do the very same thing. This is another way of saying that both structure and charism are necessary to the whole church because Jesus gave it both.

The book of the Acts of the Apostles and the letters to the Corinthians show us more of the charismatic side of the church. The epistles to Timothy and Titus show more the necessity for the structures. The church needs both. When the balance is upset there are problems.

The strong emphasis of the first Vatican Council (1870) on the authority and inerrancy of the pope seems to have upset the balance in the Roman Catholic Church on the side of structure to the detriment of charism. Pope John and the second Vatican Council (1962-64) recalled us to a greater emphasis on the charismatic side of the church. Little wonder then that within a matter of three years after that Council a charismatic renewal had appeared. Now it is making a deep impression on the Roman Catholic Church in many parts of the world.

This is cause for great hope and rejoicing. Even more, we rejoice that at the very same time a similar powerful movement of the Holy Spirit is making itself felt among Christians of many other traditions. This is bringing us together to pray and share with others in genuine love of God and faith in Jesus. The Spirit of God is enabling us to see beyond doctrinal divergencies and to embrace one another as true brothers and sisters in Christ.

Personal renewal

My interest in the charismatic renewal dates back to the end of 1969. At that time it was usually referred to as the Pentecostal Movement. I was directing the work of the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Sydney. The demand to dispose of queries about the church's attitude to the Pentecostals forced me to investigate it.

A few months later I was in Ireland. I raised this concern at the Maynooth summer school. Only then did I become aware that it wasn't so much a new sect or movement but a spirituality which seemed to be touching all the Christian denominations.

My first direct experience of it was in a small family group of part Baptist and part Anglican background. I came away with the conviction that they were unquestionably people of deep faith in the fatherhood of God and the power of prayer. I remember praying that we might be able to infuse a little of their expectant faith and prayerfulness into some of our Catholic organisations, particularly youth groups.

I was ready and anxious to see charismatic prayer groups take root in our Catholic parishes. In a Christmas newsletter to priests in 1971 I expressed the view that when properly guided, these pentecostal groups might well be the key to a genuine renewal of faith in our parishes.

The first known Catholic groups in this charismatic renewal grew within the American Catholic Universities of Duquesne and Notre Dame in 1967. Many others followed. Two years later there was a small group in Sydney.

After a few visits to that Sydney group I felt ready to surrender my life in faith to the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit made me more deeply aware of my own sinfulness, but also showed me more clearly the power of prayers and the reality of the living word in the scriptures.

This has neither made me perfect nor solved my problems. It has given me new strength to cope with my problems and a wonderful new sense of power in my priestly ministry.

Parish renewal

My own conviction that this is the key to the renewal of the faith of all Christians has grown stronger over the years. Now that I am pastor of a suburban parish I have had opportunity to test my original conviction that ideally our prayer groups ought to be an integral part of the life of the parish community.

Initially I invited parishioners to join me one evening each week for quiet spontaneous prayer which would be open in faith to the Holy Spirit. Some came once or twice but not again. Gradually a few remained. The group began to grow in depth and size.

We have prayerfully examined our basic beliefs in the place of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives. We share the scriptures and respond to them in prayer. The Holy Spirit is building us into a community of faith, charismatically renewed.

Often when parishioners bring their problems to me I bring both parishioner and problem to the praying community. The prayer of faith heals, though not always the way we might expect. People are touched by the love and faith of the group. Even when problems remain, new strength seems to be found to cope with them.

My people are beginning to be ministered to, not just by a harrassed pastor but by a loving community. We grow daily in faith and awareness that we are indeed the living body of Christ, the Christ who is still teaching, still loving, still healing.

More important for me is the sure knowledge that I have the ongoing prayerful support of this growing community of faith. Like Paul, I long each week to see them not only to share spiritual gifts with them but,

what is better, to find encouragement among them for our common faith (Romans 1:12).

Some priest friends of mine have asked me to visit their parishes and 'start a branch' for them. I believe that is quite impossible. This is not in essence a movement or an organisation. It is a way of living, a surrender in total faith to the living God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

I believe the only way that priests or ministers or any Christian leaders, whether Bishop or Moderator or whatever, can 'get a branch started' is by making this total surrender in faith themselves and then inviting their people to join them.

People may be slow in coming at first, but if we persevere they will come. Then the church will be renewed.

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Chapter 20

An Orthodox Comment on Renewal

Lazarus Moore

Archimandrite Lazarus Moore is an Orthodox priest

I had been living for four or five years in North India in the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains in wild, rocky country at a shopless place called Sat Tal, which is Hindi for Seven Lakes. We were about twenty miles from the nearest railway station, Katgodam, not far from the Nepal border, about 200 miles from Delhi.

In 1967 I happened to be on the plains in the big city of Bareilly. There I met two Pentecostal preachers from Canada. Finding them ready for a spell away from the scorching heat of the plains, I invited them to spend a few days with us in the cool of the hills. They gladly accepted.

One morning at about eight o'clock we three went upstairs to a large upper room and began to pray, standing. After about fifteen minutes an elderly Indian doctor's wife joined us for about ten minutes, and again we were left praying aloud, still standing. About nine o'clock I was flooded with the spirit of love and joy and started praying in a tongue I hadn't learned. No human hands were laid upon me but it was good to have two experienced witnesses with me at the time.

One of the results of this was that I found a new freedom in prayer and preaching which gave me a much needed boost.

Renewal in the church

What does this great world-wide movement mean for the church? I believe it is the one thing we need. Jesus promised, 'The one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these' (John 14:12).

Before Pentecost, the apostles were high and dry, proud, ambitious, jealous, quarrelsome, selfish and cowardly. At Pentecost they were revolutionised and became men of authority, power and praise. Instead of quarreling about who was greatest, 'great grace was upon them all' (Acts 4:33). This was true of the Christians in general.

The apostles had received the Holy Spirit when the risen Lord appeared to them as they were hiding behind barred doors, breathed into them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22). But they still needed to be equipped for service by the new gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.

It is obvious that the baptism in the Holy Spirit or personal Pentecosts are equally indispensable for Christians today if local churches are to be born and the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdom of Christ. This is a matter of simple obedience to God's directive, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18).

To expect people who have not experienced their own personal Pentecost and been filled with the Spirit to do the work of God is like sending an army to the front without equipment, unarmed.

It is doubtful if, without being and keeping filled with the Spirit of God and praying in the Spirit, you will be able to rejoice and leap for joy when people hate you, exclude you, revile you, and defame you (Luke 6:22). Nor will you be able to rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

The blessing of Pentecost can be lost. It is inevitably lost when obedience lags. Jesus identified unbelief with disobedience, which is one word in Greek (as in John 3:36, 'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life'). The Spirit-filled must be Spirit-ruled.

Repentance is the way back to grace. God's vision and plan are that all his people will be kings and priests (Revelation 1:6), born of the Spirit, living and loving in the Spirit, praying and interceding in the Spirit, working and walking in the Spirit, led by the Spirit and overflowing with the Spirit.

Let us pray that all will repent in time and be able to say with the apostle Paul, 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision' (Acts 26:19).

Thank God that all over the world today he is pouring out personal Pentecosts and filling his people, including Orthodox Christians, with his glorious and life-giving Spirit in his sovereign unpredictability. We too are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given, and is giving, to those who obey him (Acts 5:32).

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Chapter 21

A Lutheran Perspective

Glen Heidenreich

Mr Glen Heidenreich wrote as the Director of Lutheran Renewal Ministries in Australia.

The Lutheran Church of Australia is conservative, both traditionally and biblically, with a strong sacramental theology. It teaches the 'real presence' in holy communion, and the communion is usually closed to non-Lutherans. The Lutheran Church stands firmly on baptismal (infant) regeneration, is grace and faith centred, and holds close to its confessions which were birthed shortly after the Protestant Reformation.

Luther's writings still have a major influence. They are held in high regard throughout the church. The Bible stands as the inerrant and inspired Word of God. The great creeds of the church are regularly confessed during worship services which are mostly liturgical style.

The Lutheran Church of Australia, being small compared to other mainline denominations, is like a great family. Most of its members are descendants of early German migrants who came to Australia because of religious persecution in their homelands. There is strong loyalty within its ranks.

Although the Lutheran Church worships and confesses the Holy Trinity, sermons are mostly Christ-centred, with less emphasis on God the Father, and still less on the person of the Holy Spirit. This came about, I believe, because of the great grace-centred emphasis of the Reformation.

The church confessions do address the person and work of the Holy Spirit to some degree but they, like the creeds, have centred on the person of Jesus Christ. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is seen as a once off empowering and birthing of the church.

Right from the beginnings of the charismatic renewal within the Lutheran Church here in Australia, and indeed throughout the Lutheran Church worldwide, there has been a strong caution coming from church leaders and theologians regarding the renewal emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Traditional Lutheranism has consistently claimed that the Lutheran renewal movement espouses a theology of glory at the expense of the theology of the cross, that the use of the term 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' causes confusion and undermines the church's belief in baptismal regeneration, and that folk who have been 'filled with the Sp[irit]' are claiming to have something more, seeing themselves as elitist and setting themselves above the average church member.

Happily, better relationships are growing between traditional and renewal circles in most sections of the church, although some hurt still remains.

Jacob's Ladder

The first evidence here of Lutheran charismatic renewal occurred in the early to mid-seventies at a small city outreach and street ministry in Adelaide then known as Jacob's Ladder. Youth from various metropolitan congregations began this work, eventually calling Pastor Doug Kuhl to lead it.

Doug was, and still is, an inspirational leader. He gathered a strong support group and developed the ministry toward street kids and bikers. They ran a coffee shop on week nights and gathered those interested for Sunday worship services.

There was a mix of street kids, bikers, and straight middle class Lutherans worshipping in a free style with choruses. These included strong warfare songs sung with great gusto as well as gentle love songs to Jesus. Free prayer came from all over the congregation. This would be followed by Doug opening the Word to the group with its many new converts.

Doug's beautiful ministry related the Father's love to the broken and lonely. Then there would be holy communion, usually lasting over an hour as many wept before the altar receiving healing, both physical and emotional, while others were being born again, and still others were having demonic influences cast out of their lives.

The fellowship among the worshippers was very special. It resulted in many forming communities based on the early church model.

During those heady days of Jacob's Ladder the charismatic gifts of the Spirit were first evident in Lutheran renewal groups. Speaking and singing in tongues, interpretations, prophecy, words of knowledge, and prayers for healing were integrated into the life and worship of the congregation.

Generally, after people were born again they would be prayed for to be filled with the Holy Spirit and were encouraged to speak in tongues. Life in the Spirit courses were held where new believers and Christians of many years would study together about the work of the Holy Spirit and receive prayer for the infilling of the Spirit.

Dialogue between church leaders and Lutheran charismatic renewal leaders took place on a regular basis. Was this charismatic renewal of God, or not? That was the issue. These were often very painful meetings with emotions running high.

Eventually in 1977 the church came out with a statement under which Lutheran charismatic renewal could exist within the Lutheran Church of Australia. The statement adopted by the General Church Council eased a lot of the tension and has enabled Lutherans who see themselves as charismatic to stay within Lutheran circles, although it hasn't been easy for many.

Charismatic renewal has spread throughout the Lutheran Church in Australia. The movement, as it is often called, is conservative by Pentecostal standards. Probably 10% of Lutherans have been involved in some way or other with Lutheran Renewal. Camps and conferences are held regularly in most states. These provide a great opportunity for charismatic people and others who are interested to come together for fellowship, teaching and worship.

My journey

How did I get involved with renewal?

My dear wife, Judith, received this blessing early, long before we were involved in full time ministry. Always seeking a closer walk with Jesus, she joyfully submitted to prayer for the infilling of the Holy Spirit from a girl friend who had returned from America saying, 'There is something more.'

Judith received a wonderful release of the Holy Spirit, speaking in an unknown language and overflowing with joy and love. Opposition quickly surfaced. Although the pastor preached against charismatic renewal, some people sought Judith out to ask her what had happened to her. Within months five or six families received this infilling of the Holy Spirit and this small group shared a beautiful fellowship.

I was confused, uncertain, and rather negative. I hoped it would all go away. The thing that touched me most was Judith's new found love for me and our children. Although I didn't understand what was happening, I stood by my wife as best I knew how. Yet secretly I wished that life could return to 'normal'.

One night at a local men's fellowship meeting we discussed a paper critical of the practices and beliefs of charismatics. One point made was that these people roll around on the floor, presumably describing Holy Rollers. I thought, 'I've been married to one of these charismatics for a year and I have never seen that.'

While the meeting continued I looked up the proof text used to condemn these practices - 1 Corinthians 14:40. It says, 'all things should be done decently and in order.' I noticed the previous verse says, 'be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.' So I quickly skimmed through 1 Corinthians 12 - 14 (which Judith had repeatedly asked me to do, but in my stubbornness I hadn't).

I realised then that all this talk of gifts of the Spirit was in the Bible. In my ignorance I had spoken against what God had written. How ashamed I felt.

A dear brother in the Lord spent many hours with me, opening the scriptures, encouraging, exhorting and explaining the work and person of the Holy Spirit. Gradually God gave me a longing for the fulness of the Holy Spirit. Inherent resistance began to crumble. Fears disappeared. Eventually I asked God to give me the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Obviously the Holy Spirit was present in my infant baptism and had in fact always been present in me, but I knew that the Holy Spirit had certainly been quenched in my life. Since God filled me with his Spirit or released the Holy Spirit in my life I have had a deeper relationship with Jesus, a richer appreciation for his Word, a sensitivity to act according to his will, and a fuller more complete life.

Judith and I subsequently, with others, bought out a burned-out hulk of a building called 'Manoah' with the view of rebuilding it and developing a Christian community. Manoah consists of some eight family units plus accommodation for 20-30 people. Facilities for retreats with conferences

and dining rooms are set in 40 acres of beautiful gardens in the Adelaide Hills.

Our ministry has been largely to Lutheran renewal folk throughout Australia. We help local leaders to arrange camps and generally seek out and encourage people who are open to renewal.

We have been leading marriage refreshment weekends both at Manoah and in other states, in which God is able to strengthen and give purpose to marriages which often lack sparkle and meaning.

Recently we have been involved in Schools of Evangelism. We hope to help run these throughout a church which is awakening to the great call that is upon it to be the light of Jesus to a lost world.

We praise God for his great grace in our lives and our prayer is that he will continue to use us in whatever way he chooses.

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Chapter 22

Charismatic Renewal: Myths and Realities

Rowland Croucher

The Rev. Dr Rowland Croucher wrote as a Baptist minister and was editor of the newsletter Grid. This chapter is adapted from the Summer 1986 issue.

Charismatic renewal is not going way. According to David Barrett, editor of World Christian Encyclopedia, pentecostals and charismatics numbered an estimated 100 million worldwide in 1980. He says that number jumped to about 150 million by 1985 and 337 million by 1989.

The word charismatic (Greek 'charisma' - a gift of grace) is useful as an adjective but sometimes offensive as a noun. Here we will reluctantly use charismatic as a noun, and as an adjective, but with the understanding that every true Christian is charismatic.

We are now hearing about post-charismatics. They had assumed the experiences in Acts 2,8,10,19 and 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 were normative for all Christians for all times. Having sought an emotional high, they found that their version of the charismatic renewal promised more than it delivered.

Let us work through the myths or misconceptions in order.

1. Renewal is a fairly modern phenomenon

Those unfamiliar with the mistakes of the past, as Santayana said, are likely to repeat them. Movements of religious renewal are not new. That happens when something lost is found: the book of the law (Josiah), prayer and asceticism (Desert Fathers), simple lifestyle (Franciscans), justification by faith (Luther), sanctification (Wesley), spiritual gifts (Pentecostals).

Christian renewal emphasizes the church's organic, communal nature and tends to idealise the primitive apostolic church. Static institutions are challenged to change and become dynamic.

Traditionalists are usually blind to the disparity between the institution's claims and its ineffectiveness. Renewalists often have little, or an idealised, sense of history; God is on their side and against the institution. They don't realize that they too will set up new institutions which will eventually settle down, preserve a status quo and be challenged again.

Howard Snyder and others have helped us formulate a mediating model of the church, which affirms history and expects renewal - both.

2. **Enthusiasm is a sign of immaturity**

Not necessarily. Stolid Anglo-Saxons may not approve of too much enthusiasm, but other cultures (Latins, Africans) like it. Two Israelite

leaders, Eldad and Medad, got excited when the Spirit fell on them, so Joshua the institutional spokesman told Moses to stop them. Moses retorted by wishing the Spirit might similarly fall on the lot of them (Numbers 11:26-30)!

Experiences of some of the mystics (Richard Rolle, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross), reveal an affinity to modern charismatic phenomena.

The Holy Spirit being manifested in a person, a culture or an age produces various attitudes: an ordering attitude, a praying attitude, a questioning attitude, and an attitude of receiving. Without the receptive attitude the other three dry up. Mark Hillmer says that without mystical experience, without an ongoing awareness of the presence of God, we do not live a full and rich Christian life. The charismatic renewal represents the re-entry into the world of the felt presence of God. It means that mysticism, the attitude of receiving, is being renewed for us.

In all renewal movements there is a predictable dialectic: a move far enough one way will cause the pendulum to swing back to the other extreme.

The sad history of enthusiasts illustrates both the dangers of unchecked fervency not centred on the revelation of Jesus Christ, and also the inadequacy of merely institutional or rational authority. The faith is endangered when Christians have to choose between this uncontrolled fervency and dessicated, authoritative, uninspired orthodoxies in Protestantism or Catholicism. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love and community, the Spirit of reflection and control.

3. Pentecostalism is an ecclesiastical aberration that can be ignored

Not without reason has Pentecostalism been called the third force within Christendom. Pentecostalism teaches a necessary second stage in a believer's relationship to the Lord - baptism in the Spirit - whose initial evidence is speaking in tongues. Its mission has been to restore spiritual gifts that had been neglected or opposed by the churches: tongues, interpretation, prophecy, faith, miracles, healing, wisdom, knowledge, and discernment (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

4. Charismatic renewal in the 1960's and 1970's was indistinguishable from the older Pentecostalism

The Neo-pentecostal renewal began in a significant way in the historic churches in the 1950's.

Catholic charismatic renewal (the term Neo-pentecostal soon went out of vogue) probably goes back to Pope John XXIII convoking the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), and his prayer that the Holy Spirit would renew the church as by a new Pentecost.

Charles Hummell uses a World War II analogy to explain what happened. Pentecostals based their pneumatology on the Synoptics and Acts: wasn't Jesus first conceived by the Holy Spirit, then later baptized in the Spirit? Didn't the disciples receive the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them, but were later filled with the Spirit at Pentecost?

Traditional theologies, on the other hand, were Pauline. They said you mustn't build doctrines from these events in the primitive church, but rather ask 'What do the New Testament letters to various churches teach us?' And only once is baptizing in the Spirit explicitly referred to there (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). And so the battle-lines formed, and the troops became entrenched within their fixed positions.

It was something like the French Maginot Line facing the equally impregnable Siegfried Line. Each army was safe behind its ramparts but unable to advance. Suddenly the German panzer divisions moved swiftly around these fixed positions and rolled into Paris without a pitched battle.

So with our little theologies. We fight our wars, protect territory already won, and are often ill-prepared to take new ground. Hummell explains that for decades pentecostal and traditional theologies of the baptism in the Spirit faced each other along one major doctrinal battle line. Then suddenly the Holy Spirit moved around these fixed positions to infiltrate charismatic renewal behind the lines in mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.

Catholic charismatic renewal has less emphasis on spiritual gifts and more on nurturing a personal relationship with Christ and on developing Christian community. In 1979 the Australian Catholic Theological Association said that through the movement thousands of Australian Catholic men and women were able to experience a deeper conversion to Jesus Christ; a renewal of faith; an introduction to a serious prayer life; a new appreciation of the Scriptures; an openness to the use of their gifts from the Holy Spirit; a commitment to evangelism.

5. Conservative churches are frightened to touch charismatic renewal because it is an all-or-nothing package

Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller Seminary has popularized the notion of a third wave of renewal experienced in many churches in the 1980's. He says that many historians feel this century has seen the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit since the first century or two. The first wave came with the pentecostal movement. The second came around the middle of the century with the charismatic movement. The third wave is more recent, having begun around 1980, with the same powerful, supernatural acts of the Holy Spirit which had been confined to pentecostals and charismatics now being seen in a growing number of evangelical churches.

Wagner goes on to talk about his '120 Fellowship' that meets from 7.30 to 9.15 Sunday mornings. They see signs and wonders on a regular basis. They don't teach a baptism in the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace but see the Spirit's impact as a filling or anointing of the Spirit which may happen to a person many times. They do not permit themselves to be called Spirit-filled Christians, as if others in the church were something less than Spirit-filled.

They try to avoid the Corinthian error concerning tongues; they neither forbid nor stress it. They treat tongues as just another spiritual gift, not as a badge of spirituality. Many pray in tongues, but they do not encourage public tongues in their class.

Wagner sees the third wave of the Spirit as an opening of the evangelicals and other Christians to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. He notes evidence of this in many mainline churches now

incorporating renewal in their worship service, sponsoring healing services, or praying for healing and deliverance in their normal worship times.

6. There's only one way to understand the term baptism in the Spirit

Baptism in the Spirit, in the pentecostal and charismatic traditions, is an effusion of God's Spirit upon a Christian with power for praise, witness and service. It is an experience which initiates a decisively new sense of the powerful presence and working of God in one's life, and usually involves one or more charismatic gifts, observes Francis Sullivan. Pentecostals normally view it as a second work of grace. Charismatics have come to understand it as a deepening of the faith grounded in the new life received in Christ.

When a person becomes a Christian (and that can happen in many different ways), he or she never realizes all that has happened. A fuller understanding of justification, for example, may come much later. But it happened earlier. So we mustn't put dogmatic strait-jackets on this experience. Conversion can be dramatic (if the person was running hard from God beforehand, for example), or quite matter-of-fact.

So with the Holy Spirit. Luke and Paul write about the work of the Spirit from different perspectives. For Luke the Spirit gives believers power for witness in the world - and that can be repeatable. Paul talks about the Spirit incorporating us into the body of Christ - that's once-for-all.

Words can have different meanings in different contexts. Paul has perhaps five separate meanings for flesh. The Bible has many ways to describe the meaning of the death of Christ. Baptism is used in the Scriptures as a flexible metaphor, not merely as a technical term. I heard theologian Clark Pinnock say that so long as we recognize conversion as truly a baptism in the Spirit, there is no reason why we cannot use 'baptism' to refer to subsequent fillings of the Spirit as well'.

7. Regarding spiritual gifts, the best course is to be conservative (stick to the safe ones and leave the others well alone)

Every church ought to be open to the full spectrum of the gifts. Spiritual gifts are meant to create truly Christian community. Where there is love, there'll be gift-giving. God's gifts are love-gifts - God at work.

Gifts are given freely by the Holy Spirit. They can't be manufactured by us nor is their presence or absence a sign of Christian maturity.

In a truly biblical fellowship the focus is not on the gifts, but the Giver. But that shouldn't be a cop-out, ignoring the gifts we aren't comfortable with.

Here's a common problem: 'I had the best hands laid on me, but nothing happened'. Well, what did you expect to happen? Faith-filled prayer believes you have received the Spirit: leave the rest to God's timing. David du Plessis (Mr. Pentecost) says that baptism in the Spirit is always easy when Jesus Christ does it for you, but always difficult when you struggle to do it yourself or with the help of others. And Richard Lovelace comments that Christians act as though fellowship with the Holy

Spirit were very hard to establish. Actually it is very difficult to avoid! He says all that is necessary is for the believer to open up to that divine Reality in the centre of consciousness which is the most fundamental fact of a Christian's inner life'.

8. Prophecy isn't needed today - we've got the Bible

Western fundamentalism has been infected with dispensationalism which sees the activity in the Book of Acts as transitional; the canon of Scripture is now closed, and the curtain has been brought down on all this sort of thing. When Paul says tongues and prophecy will be with us until the perfect comes (1 Corinthians 13:10) they say Paul meant a perfect Bible. The rest of the church interprets Paul as referring to heaven, when we shall see face to face.

Prophecy is a direct dominical utterance (thus says the Lord) for a particular people at a particular time and place, for a particular purpose. The Divine Word also comes through Jesus, through Scripture, through circumstances, and through visions (more commonly in non-Western cultures).

Prophecy gives the church fresh insights into God's truth (Ephesians 3) or guidance about the future (Acts 11), or encouragement (1 Corinthians 14:3, 1 Timothy 1:18), or inspiration or correction. It either edifies the church or brings it under judgement (God is in this place! - see 1 Corinthians 14:25). The biblical prophets combined judgement with hope.

9. Tongues is an ecstatic gift (for immature Christians)

The gift of tongues (glossolalia) is a quasi-linguistic phenomenon, not language in the normal sense of the term.

Tongues-speaking is not an indication of mental imbalance. After fifty years of research the consensus still runs, as with Virginia Hine over twenty years ago, that available evidence requires that an explanation of glossolalia as pathological must be discarded.

Two decades of research into the discrete functions of left and right hemispheres of the brain appears to show that the dominant cerebral hemisphere (the left, for 95% of the population) specializes in thinking processes which are analytical, linear, logical, sequential, verbal, rational. The right hemisphere normally shows preference for thought that is visiospatial, simultaneous, analog (as opposed to digital), emotional.

While speech has been seen to rise from mapped sectors of the left hemisphere, language-formation capacities are probably spread over both hemispheres. Glossolalia may be right hemisphere speech, sharing a location beyond - but not contradictory to - the usual canons of rationality. It is appropriate to think of glossolalic prayer as neither irrational nor arational, but rather transrational; when reason fails in prayer, the Spirit helps (Romans 8:26,27). It's spirit to Spirit communication rather than mind to mind. (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Richard Beyer claims that there is a fundamental functional similarity between speaking in tongues and two other widespread and generally accepted religious practices, namely Quaker silent worship and the liturgical worship of Catholic and Episcopal churches.

10. What if they're not healed?

Let's look at the tough questions.

Does God want everyone healed? Pentecostalists usually say yes (and if you aren't, the problem is with lack of faith - yours, or your praying friends' or your church's).

Most others would say no.

Francis McNutt offers a more balanced view. In general, he says, it is God's desire that we be healthy, rather than sick. And since he has the power to do all things, he will respond to prayer for healing unless there is some obstacle, or unless the sickness is sent or permitted for some greater reason.

The church today surely needs less pride and prejudice in this area. 'But what if we pray publicly and they're not healed?' is the kind of faithless question that stymies our maturing in this area. Our calling is to be faithful and obedient. It's God's business whether he heals or not!

11. Deliverance from evil spirits is a medieval or animistic idea. We've now outgrown all that.

Naturalism is a view of the world that takes account only of natural elements and forces, excluding the supernatural or spiritual.

This world view has influenced theology in this century principally through Rudolf Bultmann. He claimed that because the forces and laws of nature have been discovered we can't believe in spirits, whether good or evil.

Against this, the biblical worldview holds that the universe consists of both visible and invisible creatures, angels, demons, and powers. As theologians like Gustav Aulen and Helmut Thielicke point out, the inbreaking of God's kingdom in the ministry of Jesus Christ can't be understood apart from its being a war against the principalities of evil. Emil Brunner says we cannot rightly understand the church of the New Testament unless we break out of the strait-jacket of naturalism and take seriously the dynamic manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Someone has calculated that 3,874 (49%) of the New Testament's 7,957 verses are 'contaminated' with happenings and ideas alien to a naturalistic world-view. Morton Kelsey noted that the only large group of Christians who take seriously the idea of a direct encounter with the non-space-time or spiritual world are the Pentecostals and the charismatics, and they have come in for derision from every side.

However, as C.S. Lewis and others have warned us, there are two opposite errors we must avoid: either disbelieving in the devil's existence, or giving Satan more attention than he deserves. Cardinal Suenens similarly exhorts us to steer a safe course between Scylla and Charibdis, between underestimation and exaggeration.

Within the church the gift of discernment of spirits is very important. The Scriptures suggest various tests to discern the spirits: Is Christ glorified (John 16:14)? Is the church edified? Are others helped? Does it accord with Scripture? Is there love? Is Jesus Lord of the person's

life? Is there submission to church leaders - allowing others to weigh what is said or done?

12. It's all so divisive that we ought to leave charismatic issues well alone

Divisiveness would head anyone's list of the issues confronting us in the modern charismatic renewal.

My observation, however, is that divisiveness is not a function of the presence or absence of certain spiritual gifts, but of insecurity, fear (charisphobia), insensitivity (charismania), or lovelessness on one or both sides.

David Watson talked about tidy churches, with piles of papers neatly in order. The windows are opened, but the fresh wind of the Spirit blows the papers about, so the elders scurry around collecting them all again, and close the windows. You've got tidiness, even stuffiness.

That's the picture of many a church, he suggests. He wants to have the windows open with a fresh breath of the Holy Spirit blowing. Untidiness with life is preferable if the alternative is tidiness and death. One of the tidiest places you can find is the cemetery.

Let us beware of the error Gamaliel warned about (Acts 5:33-39). If this is of God, we must take the movement seriously.

Certainly the swift stream of renewal often throws debris on to the banks. Old wineskins can't cope with new wine without bursting. When the Spirit is at work, the devil will be sowing weeds among the wheat.

13. Experience-centred and Word-centred theologies won't mix

The success of an experiential theology must be judged by the ease (or lack of ease) with which it moves from Spirit to Word. If Word and Spirit can be held in dynamic union, then experiential theology has the possibility of becoming definitive for the life and witness of the church today.

Too often Word takes the place of Spirit. Our traditional theologies run the risk of being rationalistic, contrived conceptual schemas. The Holy Spirit is the subject of a sterile pneumatology, with little openness to an experience of his power.

But, again, an experience-centred theology sometimes stays there. Sometimes there's an unhealthy identification of truth with a prophetic leader, or a great experience; everything else derives validity through reference to these. Or else the Bible is used as a sanction for one's independent feelings and experiences. Or perhaps we are not open to the whole of experience.

Thus an unhealthy individualism and a pervasive subjectivism often accompany pieties of personal experience. As Russell Spittler has put it, individualism is a virtue when it assures conscious religious experience, but becomes something of an occupational hazard for Pentecostal-charismatics. Add in some dominant personality traits, take away an acquaintance with the church's collective past, delete theological sophistication, and the mix can be volatile, catastrophic.

Let us beware of inhabiting simplicity this side of complexity, or complexity the other side of simplicity, but rather move to simplicity the other side of complexity!

The security of the slogan is easier than the hard work of discovering the truth. Much of what is written in pentecostal/charismatic books is what Kilian McDonnell calls enthusiastic theological fluff - pink hot air in printed form.

There is a great need for a thorough-going charismatic theology. For example the juxtaposition of the ideas of baptism in the Spirit and the release of spiritual gifts may be seen to be a most significant contribution to twentieth-century theology, but a lot more work has to be done on it yet.

14. In the church's worship you can't mix charismatic elements with traditional forms

Probably, in retrospect, it will be seen that the pentecostal movement will have made its most important contribution in corporate worship, in the sphere of liturgy and preaching, and not in the sphere of pneumatology, as is constantly and quite wrongly supposed, suggests Walter Hollenweger.

Aspects of pentecostal/charismatic worship are invading traditional churches with a rush! It's becoming more common for worshippers of all kinds to raise their hands in adoration, as they sing scripture-songs in their morning worship-services. However these songs are as limited as is charismatic theology. There are very few about mission and justice, for example. They're mostly 'God loves me and I love God' songs. Nice, but there's more; love issues in a life of witness and obedience in a hostile world.

The way forward ultimately is to integrate the unique insights and results of charismatic renewal into the full life of the church, with a submission to the order, tradition, doctrine and spirituality of the church as a whole. It's not helpful to go underground. Every special movement needs the whole church body to give focus, direction, discernment and correction; it needs to be tested, evaluated, encouraged, improved and admonished. As Cardinal Suenans says, to be most useful, the charismatic movement must disappear into the life of the church.

15. The problem of elitism should eventually go away

I'm pessimistic on this one. We enjoy sorting others out according to false hierarchies of value. There have always been 'haves and have-nots' in the church. Only the categories change. In one era a priestly caste takes special prerogatives to itself and we have the evil of clericalism. In others there are heresy trials with the orthodox removing the heterodox. In the charismatic renewal, experience is the watershed: those who have 'arrived' have been 'baptised in the Spirit' in a discernible experience subsequent to conversion, and speak in tongues. But the New Testament mostly uses ethical rather than experiential categories to define stages of Christian maturity. For example, Barnabas was spirit-filled; that is, he was filled with goodness and faith (Acts 11:24).

16. Magic isn't a problem if we're ministering in Christ's name

It is possible for a miracle-centred theology to become theurgical (Greek 'theourgia' - magic). An openness to signs and wonders can easily degenerate into miracle-mongering.

Miracles are not just for show. Jesus resisted the temptation to work miracles to dazzle people or to seduce them into believing in him, notes Alan Richardson. He refused to give the Pharisees a 'sign from heaven'. He did not want to be sought after as a wonder-worker.

Magic involves repeating formulas (vain repetitions). It's wanting blessings more for my sake than God's. It's manipulating deity for my ends.

17. The charismatic renewal is ecumenical

If it is charismatic, it's ecumenical, says Mr. Pentecost, David du Plessis. But he adds that there has been a dangerous tendency by pentecostals/charismatics to criticize the church, leading to the formation of schismatic, independent groups:

The more schismata the less charismata (1 Corinthians 12:25,26), he would say. This humble Pentecostal pioneer had a passion for unity because the prayer of Jesus was for unity, that the world may believe. He saw little hope for the world unless unity comes to Christianity.

18. Charismatic renewal and mission

Christians are commissioned to do in their world what Jesus did in his: bringing salvation (wholeness, the reign of God), where there is pain, sickness, lostness, alienation, oppression, poverty, war, injustice. So the church's mission has three dimensions: evangelism (preaching good news), works of mercy (relieving persons' pain), and works of justice (addressing the causes of pain). It uses three instruments: word (what we say), deed (what we do) and sign (what God does).

Pentecostals/charismatics have brought the church back to signs and wonders and they have generally done evangelism better than others.

But pentecostal/charismatic churches are weakest of all in the justice area. There's more in the prophets than Joel's promise of the Spirit on all flesh. The prophets cried out for justice, the redress of wrongs done to the poor.

19. Being baptised in the Spirit is an antidote for antinomianism

It isn't. Antinomianism (living carelessly and lawlessly) is as much a trap for pentecostals/charismatics as for anyone.

20. Conclusions: the way forward

Sherwood Wirt noted that the most important gift God has given to the charismatic renewal is a fresh outpouring of love. Not joy, not ecstasy, not tongues, not miracles, not even martyrdom, but love.

And there's something else the cautious ought to be more afraid of: attributing the work of the Spirit to the devil. That's a very serious sin, Jesus warned.

Paul sums it up: 'Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts' (1 Corinthians 14:1).

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Chapter 23

Charismatic Renewal: Pastoral Issues

Arthur Jackson

Selections from a statement endorsed in principle by the South Australian Synod of the Uniting Church and used with permission of the Synod Committee for Renewal Ministries. The initial draft was prepared by the Rev. Arthur Jackson, a Uniting Church minister.

Origins

In the course of Christian history there have been a number of movements which may be regarded as charismatic in that they exhibit many of the features found in the modern charismatic movement. However, in this statement it is proposed to begin with developments early in this century which may be regarded as the origin of the present day movement.

In the USA in the first years of the 20th Century there were several groups which became convinced that the manifestations of the Spirit referred to in the Acts of the Apostles should still be occurring.

One such was in 1906 in a 'holiness' church in Azusa Street, Los Angeles (often regarded as the birthplace of Pentecostalism). People there, and in other places, began to bear witness to experiencing tongues, healings and prophecy.

This renewal began to spread, but was widely regarded with suspicion. Traditional Christians were unhappy about the new, exuberant freedom of these people.

Also it was part of the orthodoxy of the day that what were often called 'the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit' were given to signal the inauguration of the church, but were not to be expected in later times.

It now seems rather ironic that evangelicals generally expressed strong opposition, because some elements in the Evangelical Revival of the 18th Century, and movements which followed in the 19th, had really prepared the way for what was now happening. For example, Pentecostal teaching about a second reception of the Holy Spirit subsequent to conversion is akin to that teaching about holiness or entire sanctification as a second work of grace which emanated from the Evangelical Revival and was later taken up by 'holiness' groups.

The Pentecostals soon found themselves in a ghetto situation. For some decades, they were generally regarded as sectarian fanatics.

This meant that the historic denominations derived no benefit from the revival. It also deprived the Pentecostals of the benefits which wider fellowship would have brought to their own life and teachings.

In the late 1940's and early 1950's a new situation began to arise. David du Plessis, a Pentecostal leader, became convinced that he must visit the American headquarters of the World Council of Churches and give his testimony to the leaders there.

Interest in Pentecostalism had already begun to stir among them, for they were well aware that this was the fastest growing Christian communion on earth and that significant things were happening through it in South America. Therefore these leaders received du Plessis warmly.

As a result he was asked to speak at several ecumenical conferences, and the conviction began to grow that the Pentecostals had something to say.

Then reports began to circulate of people in historic denominations beginning to have similar experiences to the Pentecostals. The movement spread and it became apparent that people across the whole ecclesiastical spectrum were becoming involved. High church Episcopalians, Anglicans and Roman Catholics were among those bearing testimony to new experiences of the Spirit's gifts and power.

It was in the 1960's that we became aware this was also happening in Australia. Charismatic fellowships were formed during the next few years among Christians within several denominations (including Anglicans, Catholics and Methodists).

Charismatic conferences were organised, both by denominational groups and by inter-church fellowships. Some had attendances running into the thousands.

Some Anglican and Catholic bishops appointed clergy to work with the renewal fellowships, and church councils appointed committees of enquiry to assess what was happening.

The general trend of the reports was that a significant work of the Spirit was going on, but warnings were included about such dangers as undue subjectivity and divisive tendencies.

Recent developments

In the early years of the movement in Australia (as in other places) there was a distinct tendency towards a Pentecostal style and outlook. However, in recent years there has been a change.

Charismatics in the historic denominations have become convinced that renewal by the Holy Spirit is not necessarily tied to Pentecostal interpretation of the experience. They have begun to see the theologies of their own churches in a new light and to find new depth and richness in the liturgies, hymns and worship practices of their own traditions.

The present trend, then, is not so much towards the replacement of existing patterns of faith and order with those imported from Pentecostal sources. The trend now is towards a renewal and enrichment of these things in the light of a new experience of the Spirit and new biblical and theological insights that have gone along with it, as well as new fellowship with those of other communions.

Writers from various traditions have produced work on the doctrine and experience of the Spirit in recent years. They all display in one way or another an interplay between renewal in experience, in biblical understanding, and in theological statement.

Many Uniting Church charismatics are coming to feel that a new awareness of the Spirit's resources gives added point to many things in the Basis of Union.

In particular they see the charismatic renewal as a medium by which God is calling the Uniting Church to be more fully what it says it is, namely a unifying fellowship in Christ with all members active in a diversity of ministries through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Experiences of charismatic renewal

1. Positive

(a) Among individuals:

From a great number of testimonies from all churches the following characteristics emerge. Not every person bears witness to all of them, but all are common. This is true of people within the Uniting Church as well as those in other communions.

At the heart of all testimonies is a new experience of the Holy Spirit leading to:

- * a new sense of liberation with an awareness of a closer relationship to God;
- * new love for God and new devotion to the Person of Christ;
- * entering a new dimension of prayer and worship, and especially a new delight in praise and adoration;
- * a new awareness of God speaking through the Bible and a new hunger to read it;
- * a new sense of strength and adequacy in facing temptations and problems;
- * a new love for other people, manifested in such things as:
 - better family relationships;
 - new openness, caring and closeness with other Christians;
 - grass-roots ecumenism; new, warm fellowship with people of other denominations;
 - new, outgoing concern for others, manifested in evangelical zeal and diverse demonstrations of practical helping;
- * new experience of various charismata - especially some in 1 Corinthians 12 which have been unfamiliar in a great number of churches, and in particular tongues, discerning of spirits, prophecy and healings;
- * a sharpened awareness that every Christian has a ministry, and more active commitment to many forms of Christian service.

(b) In churches:

- * a growing sense of expectancy and hopefulness;
- * a heightened awareness that God is alive and working among his people;
- * a greater freedom of worship with a new spirit of spontaneous and joyful praise, and new forms of service involving wider lay participation;
- * an increase in group life of various kinds;
- * a new emphasis on healing, with healing services, special prayers for healing during normal worship, and elders ministering to the sick in terms of James 5:14-16;
- * a new eagerness to share the Good News;
- * growth in membership through conversions;
- * a new pastoral concern among laity and a growth in various forms of practical caring;

- * an increase in people offering for various Christian vocations;
- * a new, joyful liberality in giving financially.

2. Negative

There has been a negative aspect to every movement of renewal and reform in the church's long history. The movement with which we are concerned is no exception.

(a) Individual:

As frequently occurs when people are deeply moved spiritually, some have become unduly centred upon their own experiences.

Results of this vary from undue emphasis on the emotional elements of the Christian life to people being led astray (sometimes quite seriously) by supposed leadings and words from the Lord.

At times also, a more intense spiritual awareness has led to a private spirituality which is unwilling to accept the discipline of the Christian community or to heed its corporate insights.

(b) In churches:

In some places tensions have arisen in congregations. These have been mainly due to:

- * Theological or personal immaturity among some of the 'renewed', and especially to their appearing to believe that theirs is the only pattern of New Testament spirituality.
- * Misunderstanding, fear and rigidity among some church people who have felt threatened by the newness and freedom resulting from charismatic renewal.

Results of charismatic renewal

The history of revivals and renewal movements indicates that there is little that is new either in the blessings or the problems associated with the 20th Century charismatic movement.

It is the one Spirit who works in every age. Human nature, too, remains fallible and vulnerable through all the changes of the centuries.

It must be emphasised that many of the things referred to as part of charismatic testimonies are also experienced by Christians who would not regard themselves as charismatic. The Spirit's renewing in our day is not confined to those who choose to identify with the charismatic movement.

It is rather that charismatic renewal, as the phrase is commonly used, is a sign that the Spirit is moving in our day. It raises for every Christian the question, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' and it raises for every congregation the question whether it is truly a fellowship of the Holy Spirit according to New Testament patterns and possibilities.

There are parishes where wise leadership, flexibility and mature Christian love (both among charismatics and traditional church members)

have led to the enrichment of church life by a new, vital diversity. In other places this has not happened, and hurts and frustrations remain.

Maintaining unity and diversity

Without the loving unity which the Spirit creates our ministries will not effectively point to the Lord of grace. Without the diversity of the Spirit's gifts some of the fulness of grace will not be manifested.

It is not 'either unity or diversity' but 'both unity and diversity'.

Nobody who has been involved in situations where numbers of people begin to come alive in their Christian life in new ways will under-estimate the amount of love, maturity, tact and wise flexibility needed if a biblical balance is to be maintained.

Paul, using the imagery of the body, points to two causes of impoverishment and division in a church:

(a) Christians putting themselves down and feeling their own gifts are not valuable (the foot saying, 'Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,' - 1 Corinthians 12:15-16).

(b) Christians putting other Christians down and belittling their gifts (the eye saying to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' - verse 21).

It must be the constant concern of all, especially ministers and elders, to guard against these twin evils and to discern and affirm the gifts God gives to members of the Body.

There is often a tendency to over-value the out-front gifts, or those that seem more supernatural. But such things as helping, encouraging and serving are equally manifestations of the Spirit and need to be nurtured for the good of the church.

At the same time, care must be taken not to discourage gifts which are new to the life of the congregation. This is sometimes done as an easy way to maintain harmony - but it is to quench the Spirit.

Wesley sets forth the ideal - a goal so good that it is worth all the prayer, love and vigilance needed if we are to reach it:

'The gift which He on one bestows
We all delight to prove.
The grace through every vessel flows
In purest streams of love.'

The church's mission

The growth of the church in loving unity and dynamic diversity is not an end in itself. It is to be earnestly sought for the sake of the church's mission in the world.

Throughout the New Testament the Holy Spirit is linked to that mission.

* The Acts of the Apostles

In Acts the last words attributed to Jesus before His ascension make this abundantly clear: 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (1:8).

The whole book can be taken to be a filling out of the meaning of these words.

Beginning in Jerusalem the gift of the Spirit initiated, empowered, directed and sustained an expanding mission that pushed past barriers of race and culture to make Christ known far and wide.

* Paul's letters

Paul also sees the Spirit as empowering for mission. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 is a passage that focuses in one place emphases that are scattered throughout the epistles.

Paul came to Corinth conscious of his own weakness and inadequacy, but he proclaimed the word about the One who had been crucified. This was followed by demonstrative proof that the Spirit was working in power creating in the hearers a faith based on no mere human wisdom but on the power of God.

It was because he knew this could always happen that he devoted himself ceaselessly to proclaiming the Good News.

* The Gospel of John

In John's Gospel the teaching about the Spirit also has to do with the church's mission. The Paraclete (variously translated as Helper, Counsellor, Advocate and Comforter) will guide Christ's people into the truth. He will reveal the things of Christ and bear witness to him.

But it does not stop there. The Spirit's witness will result in them also bearing witness (16:12-15 and 15:26-27).

The result of such witness by the Spirit through the church will be that the world will be convicted of sin, righteousness and judgement (16:7-11).

This means that it is not we who make Christ real to the world. It is the Spirit who alone can do that when he works through us. Neither is it our work to convince people that they are wrong in not believing in him, or that true righteousness is in him alone, or that all other ways are under judgement. This again is what the Spirit does through our witness as we are faithful.

It is very liberating to realise these things. If everything depended on us the burden would be quite intolerable (as indeed it is to many Christians who are discouraged and defeated about witness to the world before they start).

But the knowledge that the Spirit is at work makes all the difference. It does not lead to pietistic passivity but rather liberates us for loving action, unclouded by fears about our own inadequacy.

It means that in every situation of mission, faithful witness and service are our responsibility, but that the results are always in his hands.

Where Christians are not aware of these resources in their own lives the whole area of evangelism seems almost impossible. Or, if they are very zealous they may adopt manipulative evangelistic techniques in their desire to get results. Both attitudes are equally signs of unbelief in the Holy Spirit.

The love and compassion released in Christians by the Spirit should also result in sensitivity, concern and courage concerning human need and social justice. Where renewal in the Spirit inspires both evangelism and social action, there the church's mission goes forward with a balanced fulness and power.

So-called charismatic renewal that merely results in fervent holy huddles is a distortion of the gospel.

The desperate need of the world and the increasing secularisation of our society should awaken us to the urgency of the mission Christ has committed to us. Yet how ineffective we are (despite the good things that do happen) compared both with the needs of the hour and with the potential set forth in New Testament teaching about the Spirit!

It is time we ceased planning to get ready to lay foundations for outreach sometime in the future. The Spirit is calling the churches to make disciples and spread the Good News NOW.

Pastoral considerations

Life in the Spirit does not mean freedom from struggle, conflict and pain.

Sometimes teaching about the power of the Holy Spirit gives the impression that we are not Spirit-filled unless we are constantly happy, healthy and successful. But the New Testament knows no such easy triumphalism.

Christ's baptismal endowment of the Spirit was followed by 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil. His ministry, which demonstrated the Spirit's power, culminated in the cross.

To enter into a life of being filled with the Spirit means entering into spiritual warfare. Temptations usually become sharper and our sense of our own deep need becomes greater, along with increasing confidence in sufficient grace.

There is no escape, either, from the pains sometimes involved in loving other people and seeking to bear their burdens along with them. Paul spoke of 'the sharing of his sufferings' (Philippians 3:10). The closer we live to our Lord by His Spirit the more we will discover what that means.

It is important for all involved in pastoral care to realise that a new step forward into the power of the Spirit can often be followed by problems.

Often people have been suppressing hurts, resentments or fears for years. A new openness to the Spirit can cause these things to surface. This can be painful, but necessary if people are to be made whole.

In the initial stages of a renewed life, too, there can be undulations of mood, with peaks of new joy and freedom followed by troughs of reaction.

Wherever there is spiritual renewal such things as these will happen. It is unfortunate when some people seize on these problems as signs that what has happened is all emotion and of no real value. But faithful and sensitive pastoring will help people work through these difficulties, to the permanent enrichment of their own lives and the strengthening of the church's witness.

Whatever our temperament, style of spirituality or theological stance, we all need to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. One significant way he is speaking is through the charismatic movement.

As always the treasure is in very earthen vessels. It would be easy to dismiss the treasure if the style of the vessels is not to our taste. In view of the desperate needs of this hour such an attitude would be disastrous.

As we open our lives at depth to a new fulness of the Spirit our experiences will be diverse. But if we do, the church will prove anew the truth of these words of the Lord:

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses... (Acts 1:8).

My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13).

Therefore:

Let those who have ears hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Receiving the Holy Spirit

The Spirit works in a great diversity of ways. Therefore we should not let other people's experiences too greatly colour our own expectations.

We may indeed take heart from their testimonies and be assured that just as God has met their needs he will surely meet ours. But it is unwise to expect that an identical pattern of his working will necessarily occur in us.

There are four things, however, which apply to everyone who feels a need of the Spirit's power in a new and deeper way.

(1) Recognise what the Spirit has already done in our lives and thank the Father for it.

That sense of need which brought us to Christ, the help received in times of prayer, the encouragement received from other Christians during our journey, the very fact that we acknowledge Jesus as Lord - all these, and many other things, are signs that the Holy Spirit has been at work in us. So remember these things and thank God.

(2) Being filled with the Spirit is a phrase that suggests we are totally open to him and that there is no part of our being that is closed to Him.

Filled implies total, unconditional submission. In other words, we need to search our hearts and be sure that we really are fully committed to Christ, and are not holding out against His Lordship in any part of our lives.

If we can honestly say, 'I have given all I know of myself to him' we are ready to take a step of faith to ask for a new endowment of the Spirit's power. But if there is anything we still want to keep under our own control (any relationship, ambition, indulgence or anything else) then we will ask in vain.

The Spirit cannot fill what is withheld from him.

(3) Having re-dedicated ourselves to Christ the Lord, we may confidently ask.

The promise of Jesus, according to Luke, is quite unequivocal: 'If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' (Luke 11:13). At this point it would be helpful to read and pray about this whole section, verses 9 to 13.

(4) Having asked for the gift, rest on his promise and begin to thank him for the answer.

It is here that some find themselves in difficulties. If their prayer is not followed by some deep emotion or other striking manifestation they begin to worry and doubt. But the promise is that God will give his Spirit, not that we will necessarily have some emotional realisation of his presence. We may, or we may not!

One who prayed for the power of the Spirit rose from her knees, saying, 'Well, I've no doubt God has answered our prayer as he always does. Now we'll wait and see what happens.'

In her case she began to find a new ability to cope with difficult relationships, new freedom from worry, and eventually a new liberty in prayer and praise. But she found those things as she lived in the daily confidence that God had answered her prayer and had filled her with the Holy Spirit.

Several years later she said of that time of prayer, 'It was a turning-point in my life.'

(5) Finally, being filled (or renewed or released) with the Spirit is not the end of all questing - it is a new beginning.

Ephesians 5:18, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' really means 'Go on being filled with the Spirit.' In 2 Corinthians 4:16, Paul speaks of our inward nature being renewed day by day. This means that the dedication and receptive faith which we have been considering needs to be constant.

The only way to walk in the Spirit is day by day - one step at a time.

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Chapter 24

Ministering in Renewal

Don Drury

The Rev. Don Drury wrote as a Uniting Church minister. This chapter is adapted from an article first written for the Aldersgate Journal of the Methodist Church

All over the world God's Spirit is moving. Countless thousands of Christians, concerned at the spiritual deficiency and impotence of the church and increasingly aware of the deep and persistent hunger of their own hearts, have longed and prayed for such a day.

Pope John XXIII led the Roman Catholic Church in prayer for a new Pentecost. Dr Karl Bath, the great German theologian, confidently predicted that the 1970's would mark the commencement of a new emphasis on the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. That emphasis has grown steadily since then.

Fresh from translating The Acts of the Apostles, J. B. Philips told how he had been enormously heartened by thousands of people who are sick of narrowness and churchiness and who desperately long for the shining certainties and freedom and power of the early church. He believed that the yearning for New Testament Christianity was so strong that true spiritual revival would come that way.

New outpouring

Clearly, God has been graciously preparing the way for the wonderful new outpouring of the Spirit now being experienced in varying ways all over the world.

In Indonesia, for example, more people were converted to Christianity in five years from 1966 than during the entire remarkable ministry of John Wesley in the eighteenth century. Reports continue to come from all around the world of powerful renewal and revival movements. Thousands of Christians on every continent and in every denomination are testifying to a vital new experience described as baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are being manifested across the church. Signs, wonders and miracles are occurring to a remarkable degree as in the New Testament church.

God's new action has taken the church somewhat by surprise, as often happens. We become settled and fixed in our traditions and theology. Then God acts. God's action varies from, and goes beyond, our previous experience. It upsets our familiar patterns. So we are sent scurrying back to the scriptures to try and understand what it is all about.

My own conviction is that what is happening today is scriptural and wonderfully of God. Many times over the years I have witnessed the transformation in normal Christian people of all ages as they have come

into significant new experiences of the Lord through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

These experiences usually produce many changes:

- * a new love for the Lord,
- * a desire to grow in Christ and glorify God in all things,
- * a new capacity to worship God,
- * a whole new desire and power to witness and evangelise,
- * a new love for the scriptures,
- * development of fruit and gifts of the Spirit, and
- * a new availability for service and a resultant enriching and enlivening of the church.

I agree with Dr Leslie Davidson, former General Superintendent of Methodist Home Missions in Great Britain. He saw in this new movement God's most effective means for renewing the church.

Pastoring the renewal

A real challenge confronting the church now is to learn how to pastor renewal. There is plenty of scriptural guidance for the healthy expression of the things of the Spirit. Key passages are 1 Corinthians 12-14, Galatians 5, Ephesians 4, The Acts, John 14-16.

The New Testament church accepted this same challenge as part of its pastoral responsibility. Left unpastored, unhealthy deviations are likely to occur (see 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Galatians 5).

Lack of effective pastoral help has been responsible for some unfortunate experiences and manifestations. Effective, informed pastoral guidance would enable a church to benefit richly from what God is seeking to do through this movement of the Spirit.

Ministers must be in close fellowship with those ministered to. They need a real appreciation and understanding of life in the Spirit. They can then counsel on the basis of a relationship of trust and confidence.

If ministers or church leaders are opposed to charismatic renewal they should consider why. If after a thorough examination of the scriptures they feel that it is not for them personally that is reasonable. However, they must weigh up the consequences of actively opposing any members of the congregation who have testified to a baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Some ministers have forbidden church members to mention to others their activities or charismatic experiences. It is hardly the prerogative of a minister or church leader to forbid it. That is likely to encourage division in a church where none is sought. On the other hand, it is reasonable when counselling individuals to advise wisdom in talking about their charismatic experiences.

The gifts of the Spirit should be demonstrated through a joyful Christian life. That blesses the church. If there is such a group within your church you lead, why not let it function as a fellowship group and keep in contact with it? Charismatic renewal is by no means a movement exclusive to youth or inexperienced people. Many mature people of all ages are involved. This makes it less easy to dismiss.

Charismatic fellowship

Interested people in a local church or area need to come together for regular fellowship. They will worship the Lord together, study the scriptures, minister to one another, allow the gifts of the Spirit to function, and provide a place where newcomers can find their way in a sympathetic fellowship.

Such a group provides for a degree of charismatic fellowship often not possible in normal services of worship or church groups where many would not understand. These groups need not be any more divisive than other societies or fellowships existing within a church.

If this opportunity for fellowship is not provided locally an interested person may seek out a group elsewhere. That may or may not be good, depending on the quality of the group.

A local group also needs wider fellowship from time to time. God is infinitely larger than one denomination. Today Catholics, Pentecostals and Protestants are being drawn together in a wonderful unity of the Spirit.

We can learn much from one another. Many Pentecostal churches, for example, are valuing the order, the depth and the stability being contributed to their fellowships by Catholics and Protestants. Other traditional denominational churches welcome the lively faith of pentecostal or charismatic Christians among them. In these ways the Lord is bringing the church step by step towards the fullness of the life of Christ within it (Ephesians 4:13).

Now an abundance of seminars, speakers, books, cassettes, magazines, correspondence courses and colleges deal with charismatic renewal. Many of these are excellent. Pastors and leaders need to be familiar with them so they can guide their people through this exciting new territory.

Opposition

If you are involved as a minister or church leader you should consider how to minister to those who are opposed to it. Perhaps they simply do not understand what it is all about. They may have had unfortunate experiences with over-zealous, inconsiderate, immature, supposedly Spirit-filled Christians. Some genuinely believe that this new movement contains error and is an heretical departure from the scriptures and the faith they treasure so dearly. Such people deserve patient and understanding ministry as you humbly seek the truth together.

History shows that the traditional church has always had problems accommodating renewal, as for example with Luther and Wesley. The problem lies with new wine in old, hardened, inflexible wineskins.

In the midst of great joy and new life there has been much pain and tension. We tend to resist change. The new may challenge or threaten us.

Many people, rightly or wrongly, have despaired of the mainline churches accepting renewal. They are now swelling the congregations of the rapidly growing independent Christian centres.

On the other hand, by the nineties many denominational churches have been renewed. They have great potential. Many people can now find a home in their own tradition which has become dynamically alive in the power of the Spirit.

In a day when God is so evidently at work among us, the pastor's or church leader's privilege is to encourage the church and individual Christians to a new place of dedication and availability to Christ. Then God can pour out the Holy Spirit upon us all. That will be in harmony with God's perfect will and bring great glory to Christ the head of the church.

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Chapter 25

God's New Work

Don Evans

The Rev. Don Evans is a Uniting Church minister. This chapter is adapted from an article first written for the Aldersgate Journal of the Methodist Church

Charismatic renewal, as experienced in Australia since the late 1960's, has been a new work of God. It is not a reversion to traditional pentecostalism. Indeed, it has provided a challenge to both the pentecostal and mainline denominations.

This distinction must be made if the significance of charismatic renewal is to be evaluated accurately.

To enjoy the dignity and warm sense of community of a Catholic charismatic prayer meeting is to experience what is essentially Catholic fellowship. To share in an Anglican house-group where the gifts of the Spirit are operative is to be in an Anglican group. Each tradition is discovering its own level of operation and expression. While charismatic renewal is establishing more broadly based fellowship and unity, it is a new thing which God is doing distinctively within the accepted patterns of the various denominations.

Is it God who is doing this new thing? Some have opposed it as being of the devil or of human manipulation. Others are cautious and follow Gamaliel's advice to those faced with the impact of the first charismatics, that 'if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them - in that case you may even be found fighting against God' (Acts 5:38-39).

Some of the claims made in opposition need to be examined.

1. Division

Where an experience of the Holy Spirit has been accompanied by gifts such as tongues, prophecy and healing, division has sometimes resulted. A congregation has been split over the issue, or members have resigned and moved to a more acceptable environment.

However, charismatic renewal is not inherently divisive. While some people have resigned from a church or denomination, others have entered more enthusiastically and effectively into the life of their local church. Congregations split can be contrasted with congregations brought to new life in mission and unity.

Division sometimes has occurred because of a militant, crusading attitude in some charismatics. They have forgotten that 1 Corinthians 13 comes between chapters 12 and 14. They have been blessed with gifts but are not abiding close enough to the true vine to be bearing the fruit of

Galatians 5:22-23 - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Equally, a responsibility rests upon ministers and leaders to pastor and nurture their people in this area. People coming into a new experience of deep personal significance will respond favourably if they feel understood and accepted. But if they sense that their minister is either disinterested or in opposition, and even depreciates something which is precious to them, a pastoral rift will be created which is difficult to bridge.

2. Off-centre

Many consider this renewal to be based on theological side issues. They point out that speaking in tongues is not vital in the total life of the church; spiritual healing is off-centre to the basic message of the gospel; experience is a dangerous substitute for the objectivity of faith in God's Word. But the real issues are not the value of tongues, nor the place of healing, nor experience over against the authority of scripture.

The real issue is the place of the supernatural in the ministry of the church and in the life of the Christian.

Most would agree that God is at work, but the question is 'how?' Is there room for the direct divine use of people who allow themselves to be available channels? Does God work today through 'gifts' over and above the consecrated natural gifts and abilities with which God's people are variously endowed? Is it right to expect that our faith in Christ and his Word should find expression in a new dimension of release and freedom within our lives and personalities?

The Bible indicates that the differentiation between soul and spirit is not easy. It requires a revelation keener than a two-edge sword (Hebrews 4:12). 'Soul' I take to be the psyche, the area of the natural faculties of intellect, will and emotion, the area in which we all operate as human beings. 'Spirit' I take to be the area of direct divine-human communication, a deeper level than the psyche, the level on which we know and experience God (1 Corinthians 2:9-12; Romans 8:15-16). I know God in the spirit; I understand God with the mind. My knowledge of God is intuitive; my understanding of God is intellectual.

The theological and psychological basis of charismatic experience lies in a release of the human spirit. When a person is born of the Spirit, his or her spirit is brought from death to life, from dormancy to activity as a human faculty. But this faculty can still lie smothered by the dominance of the psyche, particularly the intellect. That is why Paul contrasts human and divine wisdom, and the natural and the spiritual (1 Corinthians 1 and 2). That is why he speaks of praying and singing with the mind and with the spirit in 1 Corinthians 14 in his discussion of the use of tongues.

There needs to be a release of the spirit. Paul deliberately allowed the intellect, the natural, to be in subjection to the spirit, when he came with the gospel to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

As I understand it, a person is baptised in the Spirit when, through the submission of the natural faculties of the psyche, the spirit is allowed to flow, is released, alive and active by the direct influence of God's Spirit. This release in turn heightens the natural faculties of the

intellect, emotions and will. A baptism takes place. The natural is immersed and bathed in the influence of the person's Spirit-activated spirit.

This, I believe, is very much on-centre to an understanding of human nature, the nature of God, the divine-human relationship, the nature of the gospel and its implications within the human personality. It is the Spirit giving life in the actuality of experience. 'The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life' (2 Corinthians 3:6).

3. Emotionalism

It is easy then, to understand the criticism that charismatic experience is emotionally based or psychologically induced. But a genuine experience of spirit-release is at a deeper level than the emotions. Tongues is one expression of this release, which may be emotional, but may be quite matter-of-fact and unemotional.

However, the release of the spirit can heighten the emotions, resulting in an emotional experience. The danger then is that if the natural faculties are allowed to become dominant and the spirit smothered, then the experience becomes in essence soulish (of the psyche) and not spiritual (of the spirit).

This, I suspect, happens not infrequently in groups which have become very accustomed to charismatic expressions of worship and fellowship so that they too easily assume as a matter of course that what is occurring is 'in the Spirit'. Charismatic worship can become just as much a ritual as any other form of worship, even if it is an emotional and enthusiastic ritual.

God's genuine activity is always fresh and new. Where emotion is the result of a genuine flowing forth of spirit it is pure, wholesome, spontaneous and integrating.

4. Introversion

Some charismatic groups appear to turn in upon themselves and concentrate on enjoying the experience of fellowship. This is not uncommon, of course, in other Christian groups whose fellowship is centred in a particular interest or common experience.

Introversion, however, is not an inherent characteristic of charismatic renewal. Its essence is outreach: 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

It is stimulating to catch something of the breadth of vision of charismatic renewal in Australia - a vision of what God is doing and is about to do. Many charismatic groups have been praying earnestly and consistently and with great vision for communities, cities and the nation. These prayers have been backed over the years by activities such as street witnessing, rallies and demonstrations, rehabilitation ministries, coffee-shop evangelism, and a keen personal desire on the part of individuals to communicate Christ through daily living.

Similarly, it is encouraging to read of churches where a vigorous charismatic ministry includes a strong social programme in the

surrounding community. Sometimes these churches are guided to move towards a new area of ministry by a word of prophecy - God's word directly to them in their situation.

5. Holy Spirit centred

Charismatic renewal is based on a rediscovery of the person of the Holy Spirit. But clearly the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.

A most striking characteristic of charismatic Christians is that the name of Jesus is constantly on their lips. Their experience of the Holy Spirit has made Jesus more real and has made them less inhibited about him.

I see little future, however, for groups which meet primarily to discuss and experience the Holy Spirit for themselves. While such groups are perhaps unavoidable in the initial stages of discovery within a local area, I believe it is essential that these groups quickly be embraced as part of the total life of the church and become more broadly based in their ministry and mission.

I have a vision. It is of the church open and flexible enough to take in the new wine without the wineskins bursting. It is of ministers and leaders who are informed, strong and accepting in their leadership and who feel a responsibility to be ahead of the people they pastor in the things of the Spirit. It is of communities of Christ's people who are sensitive and obedient to what the Spirit is saying to the churches and therefore willing to become what Christ wants them to be for the accomplishing of his purposes in his world.

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Chapter 26

Future Directions for Charismatic Renewal

Peter Moonie

The Rev. Dr Peter Moonie wrote as a Uniting Church minister

One of the important signs of renewal during the last decades has been the charismatic renewal. It has brought fresh faith and vigour to millions of Christians. What is it all about?

At the heart of the charismatic or pentecostal experience is a recovery of, or a deepened personal relationship with, Jesus Christ. This is usually associated with an event known as a baptism, infilling or release of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian.

This experience, which may be sudden or gradual, is generally likened to or equated with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is often accompanied by the exercise of certain spiritual gifts. Although relatively uncommon today, they were evident in at least some New Testament churches.

These gifts include working of miracles, statements of divinely inspired wisdom, knowledge and prophecy, speaking in an unknown (to the speaker) language or utterance, and its interpretation in the vernacular of those present. Many of these uncommon gifts are cited by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and in the Book of Acts.

Many people and some parishes affected by charismatic renewal have been transformed in faith and life. The numbers of people attending renewal conferences or seminars, and the sale of charismatic books and cassettes give evidence that this renewal is growing in Australia.

As well as new motivation to share the gospel and a quickened style of worship and fellowship in some parishes, a new model of ecumenical relationship has sprung up. Christians have rejoiced together. They have discovered themselves truly one in their experience of God.

Thousands of earnest and hungry Christians have come alive in their faith and ministries. Many parishes derived fresh vigour from the new wine of the Spirit flowing among them. New levels of confidence in the reality of a Christocentric faith and the power of the Spirit have touched us in a culture and time far removed from the first century.

Moreover, the ministries of the whole people of God within and beyond the church have been rediscovered. Many Christians find their prayer life and their love of the scriptures deepened. Some have entered into styles of Christian community life that formerly may have been regarded as impossible for us.

This high voltage Christianity has not been without problems. Some Christians, enthused by their own renewal in faith, have at times been threatening, judgemental and even spiritually superior towards other Christians. Equally, some have responded with defensiveness, misinformed criticism and intolerance that has sadly led to misunderstanding and division.

Well meaning persons have gone off on schismatic ego trips. Spiritual legalism becomes evident on occasions. Some emphasise attention-seeking activities or sensationalism. Others persist in congregation hopping, forever seeking that elusive pot of gold and excitement at the end of the newly discovered rainbows of renewal.

A great concern, however, is not the aberrations going on. The concern is with what is NOT going on that should be normative in the life of any healthy, renewed church.

The charismatic renewal could be turning in upon itself in two ways:

1. The evangelistic task is not being engaged with anything like the effect that should be achieved, at least in this writer's observations.
2. Charismatic Christians generally fail to come to grips with the social implications of the gospel in terms of the redemption of society, including its structures, political systems and policies.

Evangelism

Renewed individuals and even parishes are not necessarily issuing in concerted and effective evangelistic initiatives. Yet the Bible is clear that, apart from the worship of God, the principal purpose of the church's existence is its mission to the world.

The people of God are indeed a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people (1 Peter 2:9). But why? To receive God's favour, or spiritual status, or honour, or acclaim for their own enjoyment? Not at all. It is so that we may declare the wonderful deeds of the One who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Emil Brunner declared that the church exists for mission as fire exists for burning. Renewal of the inner life of the body of Christ is primarily for the equipment of the church to be ambassadors of Christ. Our task involves imploring people, on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Yet, when we look at the life of some parishes and denominations generally, that is not how it works out in practice. The bulk of our time, energies, finances, programs and buildings are deployed in the entertainment, enrichment or interest of our current members, not for those who are yet to become Christians.

Many of those activities are good, legitimate, even necessary. But are they related to the twin criteria of the worship of God and the redemption of the world?

The charismatic renewal, or any other part of the church's life, does not warrant a place in God's plan unless it issues in being turned inside out for a needy society. Our energies and resources must go to mission in the world, especially the work of evangelism.

We need to be intentional about our mission as individuals, prayer groups, parishes and whole denominations. Our task is not to discern God's plan, but to obey it. We already know the plan. We must get on with the work of sharing the gospel with others.

Of course, that will require an undergirding of prayer, analysis, planning and training before too much action begins. But the objective must always be kept clearly in mind.

A significant development recently has been the emergence of the church growth movement. One of the most effective ways of evangelising people, the church growth authorities say, is to witness to peers of the same sub-culture. New converts then do not have to cross over cultural and class lines to join a church or group.

Therefore, homogeneous units or people groups, as they are called, should be identified and sought out. These people groups may be ethnic, professional, recreational, fraternal or other kinds. Carefully planned strategies and personnel are needed. Once Christians establish credibility, whole groups of people may turn to Christ and be baptised into the church.

These observations on church growth indicate that we are acquiring new and more effective insights into ways and means of discharging the Great Commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations. The real question is: Are we willing to use them?

In ordering our priorities aright, we can expect God to bless and further renew our churches. If we don't, our incestuousness will lead us to stagnation and death. God's will is plain. We must decide if we will obey that plan.

Social change

God's intention involves not only the individual, but also the redemption of society.

Australian Christians in the charismatic renewal have generally not caught that vision as yet. Some leaders are engaged in welfare ministries relating to alcoholic and drug dependent youth and with immigrants and aborigines. However, most of the limited thrust of social action so far in charismatic renewal relates to remedial work with individuals or families and groups at the local level, rather than involvement with the causes of social malaise.

Yet, charismatic renewal has the resources and potential necessary to effect profound social change.

Large numbers of enthusiastic and motivated people are part of its membership. Most are committed to costly discipleship. Hundreds of prayer groups and charismatic communities in Australia are ripe for an action/reflection model of outreach. They can provide the necessary support for those engaged in difficult encounters and stressful confrontation.

The existence of many communities in which material and personnel resources are pooled offers a significant potential for social action, just as it has proved effective in many evangelistic enterprises. Some people earn incomes to support others in various ministries.

A number of charismatic Christians now occupy important and influential positions in the public service, academia, the arts and the media. All of these can contribute greatly to the cause of social justice.

National communication networks including published journals or newsletters can spread the vision and enlist support for social change.

Furthermore, the charismatic renewal is a deeply biblical movement. The study of scripture is enjoined. The Bible is publicly proclaimed. As such, the ethos of renewal offers the important ingredient of grounding action in a biblical framework. That ought to preclude some of the past aberrations.

Discernment of the Spirit's guidance, a resource often exercised in the renewal, should ensure that those involved are doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

That is the challenge: the achievement of a balance in which concern for the salvation of the individual is matched with the quest for the redemption of society.

When that vision is addressed with commitment and vigour, we may yet live to see the first nation-wide religious revival Australia has ever known.

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Chapter 27

Get Your Surfboard Ready!

Dan Armstrong

The Rev. Dan Armstrong is a Uniting Church minister and Founder of Kairos Ministries based in Canberra. This chapter is adapted from 'Renewing Australia', March 1990 (P. O. Box 20, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602).

'The third wave' is a term applied to renewal. It was coined by Professor C. Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary to describe what God is doing in our day.

Wagner describes three such waves in this century. The first was the Pentecostal movement in the early 1900's. Then came the charismatic movement from the 1960's.

Both of them are continuing, as is the nature of waves. Behind them is coming a third wave. This is a new movement of God within evangelical churches. It enables those who do not call themselves Pentecostal or charismatic to move into the gifts of the Spirit without any sense of disloyalty to their evangelical origins.

I want to look at a few issues concerning those three waves.

Through history there have been great movements of God. St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, and others have had a part in the many movements in the Catholic Church. There have also been movements like the Reformation, the age of the Puritans, the Wesleyan revival in England, and the revival that began with Whitefield in the United States. Another movement of God was the raising up of the Salvation Army.

All of these have been God bringing a special emphasis to the world for a specific time. God operates within history to keep the church alive and to bring people into the kingdom.

In the same way, I believe that what has been happening over this century has been God at work again. And it has not been in the pentecostal revival alone. There are other areas where revival and renewal have been going on as well. It appears that the third wave is beginning to bring some of these seemingly separate strands together.

The first wave - the Pentecostals

When we look at the pentecostal movement at the beginning of this century we see the day of Pentecost happening all over again. God touched a group of people and they had a real first century pentecost experience.

There is no doubt that God was at work, shaking the church. I believe that the emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, particularly tongues, appeared then because God needed to bring back to the church something lost - an understanding of the supernatural.

I believe that was the purpose of the first wave. Many individual and spectacular ministries emerged. They were specific ministries. Power ministries. People who took the world by storm.

One man with this type of individual ministry came to Australia in the late 1920's. His name was Frederick Van Eyk, a South African. He made an enormous impact. He was one of the first Pentecostals to minister throughout the nation. Through him several pentecostal denominations came into being. He had his faults, but nevertheless he was a man of incredible power.

We can also recall people like Katherine Kuhlman, Amie Semple MacPherson, and the many others who had power ministries. The rest of the church called such people deluded fools or charlatans. But the world was forced to look at what was happening.

It was impossible to ignore. Perhaps there was an over-emphasis on the gift of tongues, but God used that. The world saw ordinary, everyday people operating in the supernatural power of God.

The gifts of healing and prophecy developed strongly among Pentecostals. The Pentecostal Church grew as a result. Much of that growth was from people leaving the mainstream of the church and joining it. Once they had had an experience of Pentecost they couldn't remain in churches which did not accept their new experience as valid.

This was the first wave. A wave that made the church sit up and recognise that something was going on. It was a great wave. A tidal wave. We can thank God for it. We must thank God for the Pentecostals because through them has come the rediscovery of the supernatural in the everyday life of the church.

Out of this discovery the Pentecostals developed their own theological emphasis. It was said that if a person was to receive the gifts of the Spirit there was a certain sequence of events which must happen. One had to be born again and later baptised in the Holy Spirit. The evidence was always the gift of tongues.

I am not criticising the gift of tongues. It is a wonderful gift. I use it every day. Probably I pray more in tongues than in English. But it is not the only evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in someone's life. Nor does a person have to speak in tongues to express and experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Sadly, the hard and fast emphasis on tongues locked a lot of very spiritual people out. They saw the evidence of the supernatural in the pentecostal movement but couldn't fit into what they were told was needed in order to minister in the gifts of the Spirit.

What had begun as the breath of God over the earth had become a stumbling block to many. So God stirred up another wave. That was the wave we now call charismatic renewal.

The second wave - charismatic renewal

It began in the fifties and sixties with God moving in sovereign power to bring about revival, especially in places like Africa and China. People were coming into a deep experience of God and there were great supernatural manifestations, even the raising of the dead!

Reports of these events were coming back to the western world. Missionaries working where revival was taking place came back telling what had happened to the local people, and how their own lives had been changed. The Pentecostals, also, were still challenging the church with power evangelism; evangelism where God's Word was confirmed with signs and wonders.

There was a spark, then a flame, then the renewal took off like a bushfire. Those early stages of the charismatic renewal were heady times. I still remember the first time I danced in the Spirit with a nun!

This second wave, the charismatic renewal, alerted the church to God's new emphasis for their day. The pentecostal first wave brought new emphasis on power ministry and the gifts of the Spirit. The charismatic renewal took all that on board but added new emphases.

There was a wide diversity. New dimensions of praise and worship helped many people. I was one. It released me.

Perhaps its greatest impact was to bring to the church a new understanding of the body of Christ. Christians had generally understood the body of Christ to be the worldwide church, militant and triumphal. They saw it as Protestant or Catholic, depending on their own persuasion. The new understanding brought by the charismatic renewal was that the local church is also the body of Christ.

This was a return to the truth Paul wrote in his letters to the Corinthians, the Ephesians and the Romans. He told each group they were the body of Christ. That body would minister in all the gifts of the Spirit. So the charismatic renewal has brought back the understanding that the local church is the very body of Christ. Its ministry is the full ministry of Christ. Each individual Christian is an extension of the ministry of Jesus.

As a minister of a mainline church, that totally altered my understanding of the church. I had not grasped the fact that right there in that fellowship was the membership of Christ's body. All the ministries of that local church come together to produce the very life of Christ, bringing his life into the body and flowing his ministries out from it. Each person's ministry gifts fit into that body.

This new understanding came to me very specifically. I was in the pulpit one Sunday morning, preaching. As usual I was wearing my clerical collar. As I looked out over the people, God spoke to me: 'You have to do one of two things. Either you have to put a collar on about sixty of those people out there, or you must take your own off.' I haven't worn a clerical collar since that time.

From then on our church life exploded. Wonderful things began to happen. All kinds of gifts began to operate among those people. We saw in that body, Jesus. Jesus was there in his body, and that church was representing the life of Jesus. We came alive. Our experience was multiplied thousands of times all over the world.

The charismatic renewal brought another emphasis that I personally found tremendously releasing. It was an emphasis on the unity of the body of Christ. Wherever God's people are, there is the body of Christ.

Before then a sense of unity extended mainly to those who were in renewal and in theological agreement with you. Now it was wonderful to kneel with a Catholic priest, calling together on the Lord and rejoicing in God together. It was precious to be in one accord with a brother or sister of some other denomination or theological persuasion.

Theological differences were no longer important. I didn't lose any of my evangelical emphasis. And I still have it. I am fundamental, Armenian, evangelical; but now I am Catholic and Reformed as well.

There was now a unity with the whole body of Christ. The charismatic renewal did that for me. I know it did that for millions of other people around the world as well. There was a whole new refreshing understanding of what it meant to be in unity.

People have said that the charismatic renewal has split a lot of churches and that it is divisive. We have to admit that there are instances where people are immature or lack understanding in the things of the Spirit. But I've seen more splits happen because people did not understand the work of the Holy Spirit going on in others and drew away from them.

I'm not making excuses for charismatic excesses. There have been excesses and they have sometimes resulted in splits. But the majority of people who have come into an experience of the fulness of God have developed a heart for unity.

It has been said that the charismatic renewal has peaked and is now in the process of petering out. That is not true! Many thousands of charismatic Christians are still meeting in conferences around the world. I attended one such conference in New Orleans in the late eighties where 60,000 people gathered. Charismatic renewal is still exploding worldwide.

The third wave - God has something more

God has been preparing the church for something more! I believe the third wave is that something more. We are right on the crest of that third wave now.

Take, for example, the Uniting Church. I believe that God is preparing it for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit. Here are my reasons.

First, there is a lot of questioning about the direction the church is taking. People are asking what God's purpose was in bringing the Uniting Church into being. These questions have produced some despair. That is good because it throws us back on our only real resource - God. Psalm 116:6 says, 'When I was brought low, he saved me.'

We are in the midst of destiny. We are destined to see the great move of the Spirit of God across our nation and across the western world.

Second, statistics about renewal in the Uniting Church indicate that thousands have come to a living experience of the power of God in their lives.

I move all over Australia in ministry in Uniting Churches. Every congregation has at least a pocket of people who have had a fresh experience of God's power. Some of them are struggling. Some are hurting. But they are there. It's happening. And God is raising up

ministries to build them up and say to them, 'Hang in there. The third wave is coming. Get your surfboard ready!'

The third wave is not only going to be a move among charismatics. It will be in the whole body of Christ. God is bringing us all to a fresh understanding of the Holy Spirit.

For years I have been telling people, 'Don't worry about the theological implications of the renewal movement. Just grasp what God has for you. I don't care what your theological basis is; let God develop the potential that is within you.'

God uses us all. The great new freedom the third wave is bringing is that people don't have to be involved in charismatic renewal to participate in the move of God in our day. It doesn't matter what a person's theological basis may be. God is once again showing us a dimension we had forgotten.

If you receive Christ into your life and are born again, then you have the Holy Spirit within you. Therefore the potential exists for the Spirit's power to flood through your life. It's not a bolt from outside, but the release of the Holy Spirit from within. That will enable the gifts of the Spirit to flow through you.

Make sure you have all that God has for you in terms of ministry. That's the important thing. The more experienced you become in operating the gifts of the Spirit, the more you're going to be useful to God.

The third wave is, I believe, a great wave of evangelism. The beautiful thing is that God has been preparing the way over many years. We have needed all the time it has taken to get to this place of total dependence upon God.

This is the time when God is challenging the church to holiness. I see that as I travel around the churches. God's people are being made ready.

God is in the process of doing a mighty thing. We must seek, in every way that we can, to receive this refreshing from the Lord.

God gave me a vision just recently. Through Kairos Ministries I believe I can see it beginning to happen. When I was in England recently I saw churches which had become resource centres for their regions. They send out teams to other churches. They conduct conferences and seminars, and people come from all over the country. There is a resurgence of evangelism. A whole network of ministering people is developing across the nation.

While I was in England, God spoke into my heart and said, 'This is what I want you to do. Help establish a network of resource ministries all round Australia.'

If ever there was a nation which needed that, it is Australia with its isolated communities. My vision is to set up networks of resource centres using churches that God is already raising up to really operate as the body of Christ. There would also be a group of resource people released by their churches to minister throughout the land.

This is the beginning of the third wave. It is releasing the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church so that we can all evangelise and bring people into God's kingdom and see them set free.

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Conclusion: Revival

Revival in the church and in the community brings profound change. Thousands become Christians. Crime drops. Justice and righteousness increase.

Renewal in the church can ignite revival when God's Spirit moves powerfully among us, as happened in the early church and is being seen in unprecedented revivals around the world now.

Africa saw church growth from 10 million in 1900 to over 200 million by the early eighties, 300 million in the early nineties, with 400 million projected by 2000. Christians will have grown from 9% to 48% of Africa this century. By 1980, there were 6,000 groups of the African Independent Church Movement involving 8 million people, and they multiply at the rate of a new denomination every day. East African countries have seen continuous revival for over 40 years.

Missiologist Peter Wagner's research describes Latin American Evangelicals growing from 50,000 in 1900 to over 5 million in the 1950's, over 10 million in the 1960's, over 20 million in the 1970's, around 50 million by the end of the eighties, and a projected 137 million by 2000. A quarter of these were Pentecostal by the 1950's; three quarters were by the 1980's. Over 100 new churches begin every week.

The first Protestant missionaries went to Korea in the 1880's. South Korea, a Buddhist country in 1900, had 20% Christian by 1980 and 30% by 1990 with estimates of 50% by 2000. In 1980 Here's Life Korea crusade drew 2,700,000, the largest single Christian meetings in history. Paul Yonggi Cho heads a church of over 600,000 members with over 25,000 home groups and thousands praying and fasting daily. Koreans have sent 10,000 missionaries into Asia.

China, with 1 million Protestants and 3 million Catholics in 1950, has seen growth to an estimated 50-80 million Christians. Cho now estimates 100 million Christians in China's 960 million population.

In 1990 the Soviet Union, in its first official report on religious statistics, indicated that 90 million of its 290 million inhabitants confess allegiance to a church or religious community. Many Christians remain part of underground groups, preferring anonymity. Christians estimate that over 97 million are believers in Russia, about one third of the population.

Statistics in 1988 indicated that 143 million people were church members in America, 59% of the population. The 1988 Gallup poll showed 84% of Americans believed in the divinity of Christ.

The International Religion Report of 28 January, 1991, noted that 3500 new churches begin every week worldwide, that China has 28,000 new converts a day, that Africa sees 20,000 new converts a day with 40% of Africans now Christian, that 25% of Indonesia is now estimated as Christian.

David Wang of Asian Outreach noted that the 1700 unevangelized people groups worldwide in the mid-seventies had been reduced to 1200 by 1990. He estimates these could all be reached before 2000.

What is revival?

As individuals and churches are renewed they prepare the way for revival in the land. A spiritual awakening touches the community when God's Spirit moves in power. Often this awakening begins in people earnestly praying for and expecting revival.

Edwin Orr, a leading scholar on revivals, described a spiritual awakening as a movement of the Holy Spirit bringing about a revival of New Testament Christianity in the church and its related community. It accomplishes the reviving of the church, the awakening of the community, and movements of unbelievers toward the Christian faith. Always the revived church engages in evangelism, teaching and social action.

Arthur Wallis, author of 'In the Day of Thy Power', saw revival as divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. It is God revealing himself in awesome holiness and irresistible power. It is such a strong work of God that human personalities are overshadowed and human programmes abandoned. It is God taking the field. It is the Lord working in extraordinary power. Revival makes an impact on the community and this is one way in which we may distinguish it from the more usual operations of the Holy Spirit.

Revival is often unpopular because it involves humility, awareness of our unworthiness, confession of sin, repentance, resititution, seeking and offering forgiveness, and following Christ wholeheartedly. It then impacts society with conviction, godliness, justice, peace and righteousness. This is not always welcome.

Bible Revivals

Throughout scripture we find a constant call for individual and communal repentance issuing in righteousness and justice.

Wilbur Smith notes seven revivals in the Old Testament in addition to the one under Jonah. These revivals involved:

1. Jacob's household (Genesis 35:1-15),
2. Asa (2 Chronicles 15:1-15),
3. Joash (2 Kings 11-12; 2 Chronicles 23-24),
4. Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-8; 2 Chronicles 29-31),
5. Josiah (2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 34-35),
6. Haggai and Zechariah with Zerubbabel (Ezra 5-6)
7. Ezra with Nehemiah (Nehemiah 9:1-6; 12:44-47).

He noted nine characteristics of these revivals:

1. They occurred in times of moral darkness and national depression;
2. Each began in the heart of a consecrated servant of God who became the energizing power behind it;
3. Each revival rested on the Word of God, and most were the result of proclaiming God's Word with power;
4. All resulted in a return to the worship of God;
5. Each witnessed the destruction of idols where they existed;
6. In each revival, there was a recorded separation from sin;
7. In every revival the people returned to obeying God's laws;
8. There was a restoration of great joy and gladness;
9. Each revival was followed by a period of national prosperity.

The early church lived in continuous revival. It saw rapid growth in the power of the Holy Spirit from the initial outburst at Pentecost. Multitudes joined the church.

The Lord did that through his Spirit in his people. It's an astounding account. Imagine it happening in your area!

- * At Pentecost 'about three thousand persons were added' (Acts 2:41).
- * 'But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand' (Acts 4:4).
- * 'Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women' (Acts 5:14).
- * 'The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith' (Acts 6:7).
- * 'That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria' (Acts 8:1).
- * 'A great number became believers' (Acts 11:21).
- * 'And a great many people were brought to the Lord' (Acts 11:24).
- * 'Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers' (Acts 9:31).
- * 'But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherents' (Acts 12:24).
- * 'So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily' (Acts 16:5).

Those Christians were dynamic. Not faultless, but on fire. They were accused before the civil authorities as 'these people who have been turning the world upside down' (Acts 17:6).

Revival makes that kind of impact in the community.

Church history

Throughout history many people led reform movements. These powerfully affected the communities and saw renewal or revival.

The church fathers founded monastic orders of people devoted to the service of God and people. In the 5th century Augustine of Hippo in North Africa, strongly influenced the church and society through his writings, and Patrick told of the conversions of thousands of the Irish, initiating active Celtic missionary activity. By 600 Augustine of Canterbury and his missionaries saw thousands accept Christianity in England and it was reported that they imitated the powers of the apostles in the signs which they displayed.

Francis of Assisi in the 13th century challenged people to forsake all and follow Jesus. Many did. They influenced others in society.

John Wycliffe and his itinerant preachers, the Lollards, made a powerful impact on England in the 14th century causing many reforms which aroused opposition leading to many martyrdoms.

In the 15th century John Hus in Bohemia and Savonarola in Italy led strong reform movements which brought revival but led to their martyrdoms. Hus was known for his unblemished purity of life and uncompromising stand for truth in a decadent society. Savonarola fasted, prayed and preached

with prophetic fire which confronted evils of his time, filled the churches, and brought honesty into much of civic and business life.

Gutenberg's printing press invented in 1456 made the scriptures widely available. This helped spark the 16th century Reformation with leaders such as Huldrych Zwingli in Switzerland initially calling for freedom of conscience, though later denying this for others, Martin Luther in Germany proclaiming justification by faith alone based on the supreme authority of scripture, and John Calvin in Geneva emphasising the awesome sovereignty and grace of God.

Radical reformers, such as Felix Manz the first Anabaptist martyr, were killed by some of the reformers in those days of heated religious conflict. John Knox fearlessly called Scotland to repentance amid the intense political and religious fervour of the times.

Since then many revivals have won thousands of people to faith in Jesus Christ and made a powerful impact on society.

Great revivals have included strong moves of God in 1734 in America (Edwards), England in 1739 (Wesley, Whitefield), America in 1858 (Finney), British Isles in 1859-60 (Spurgeon), Wales in 1904-1905 (Roberts), Argentina in 1952 (Hicks), Indonesia in 1964, the Solomon Islands in 1970, North America in 1971-1972, and Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island) and Arnhem Land in Australia in 1979. These are just a few revivals, and a few of the people involved.

Eighteenth century

Jonathan Edwards, the preacher and scholar who later became a President of Princeton University, was a prominent leader in a revival movement called the Great Awakening. It spread through the communities of New England and the pioneering settlements in America. Converts to Christianity reached 50,000 out of a total of 250,000 colonists.

The years of 1734-35 saw an unusually powerful move of God's Spirit in thousands of people. Edwards described the characteristics of the revival as,

* first, an extraordinary sense of the awful majesty, greatness and holiness of God, and

* second, a great longing for humility before God and adoration of God.

Edwards published the journal of David Brainerd, a missionary to the North American Indians from 1743 to his death at 29 in 1747. Brainerd tells of revival breaking out among Indians in October 1745 when the power of God seemed to come like a rushing mighty wind. The Indians were overwhelmed by God. The revival had greatest impact when Brainerd emphasised the compassion of the Saviour, the provisions of the gospel, and the free offer of divine grace. Idolatry was abandoned. Marriages were repaired. Drunkenness practically disappeared. Honesty and repayments of debts prevailed. Money once wasted on excessive drinking was used for family and communal needs. Their communities were filled with love.

In 1735, when the New England revival was strongest, George Whitefield in England and Howell Harris in Wales were converted. Both were 21 and both saw thousands converted and communities changed. By 1736 Harris began forming his converts into societies with nearly 30 of them formed by 1739. Whitefield travelled extensively, visiting John Wesley in Georgia

in 1738, then working with Howell Harris in Wales in 1739 and with Jonathan Edwards in New England in 1740, all in his early twenties.

John Wesley went to Georgia as a missionary in 1735. Whitefield sailed to Georgia at Wesley's invitation early in 1738, but they returned to England as Wesley was frustrated in his work. Then in May that year both John and Charles Wesley were converted, Charles first, and three days later on 24 May John found his heart strangely warmed in the meeting in Aldersgate Street when he listened to a reading of the preface to Luther's commenatry on Romans.

1739 saw astonishing expansion of revival in England. On 1 January the Wesleys and Whitefield and four friends from their former Holy Club at Oxford in their students days, along with 60 other people, met in London for prayer and a love feast. The Spirit of God moved powerfully on them all. Many fell to the ground, resting in the Spirit. The meeting went all night and they realised they had been empowered in a fresh visitation from God.

Revival fire spread rapidly. In February Whitefield started preaching to the Kingswood coal miners in the open fields with about 200 attending. By March 20,000 attended. Whitefield invited Wesley to take over then and so in April Wesley began his famous open air preaching (which continued for 50 years). He returned to London in June reporting on the amazing move of God's Spirit. Many were converted and many fell prostrate under God's power - a phenonemon he never encouraged! Features of this revival were enthusiastic singing, powerful preaching, and the gathering of converts into small societies called Class Meetings which met weekly.

Revival touched Scotland also. After returning from America in 1741, Whitefield visited Glasgow. Two ministers in villages nearby invited him to return in 1742 because revival had already begun in their area. Conversions and prayer groups multiplied. Whitefield preached there at Cambuslang about four miles from Glasgow. The opening meetings on a Sunday saw the great crowds on the hill side gripped with conviction, repentance and weeping more than he had seen elsewhere. The next weekend 20,000 gathered on the Saturday and up to 50,000 on the Sunday for the quarterly communion. The visit was charged with Pentecostal power which even amazed Whitefield.

That revival of holiness brought about a spiritual awakening in England and America. It established the Methodists with 140,000 members by the end of the century. Other churches and Christians were renewed and empowered. It impacted the nation with social change and created the climate for political reform such as the abolition of slavery through William Wilberforce and others.

Nineteenth century

Various revival movements influenced society in the 1800's, but 1858 in America and 1859 in Britain were outstanding. This revival became known as the second evangelical awakening, a century after first.

Typically, it followed a low ebb of spiritual life. Concerned Christians began praying earnestly and anticipating a new move of God's Spirit.

Revival broke out at evangelistic meetings in Hamilton, Ontario in Canada during October 1857 with attendances at meetings reaching 6,000, and

three or four hundred converted including many civic leaders. It was widely reported.

Jeremiah Lanphier, a city missionary, began a weekly noon prayer meeting in Fulton Street, New York in September that year. By October it grew into a daily prayer meeting attended by many businessmen. Anticipation of revival grew, especially with the financial collapse that October after a year of depression. Materialism was shaken.

At the beginning of 1858 that Fulton Street prayer meeting had grown so much they were holding three simultaneous prayer meetings in the building and other prayer groups were starting in the city. By March newspapers carried front page reports of over 6,000 attending daily prayer meetings in New York. Similarly 6,000 attended them in Pittsburgh. Daily prayer meetings were held in Washington at five different times to accommodate the crowds.

Other cities followed the pattern. Soon a common mid-day sign on business firms said: 'Will re-open at the close of the prayer meeting.'

By May, 50,000 of New York's 800,000 people were new converts. A newspaper reported that New England was profoundly changed by the revival. In several towns no unconverted adults could be found!

A leading Methodist paper reported these features of the revival: few sermons were needed, lay people witnessed, seekers flocked to the altar, nearly all seekers were blessed, experiences remained clear, converts had holy boldness, religion became a social topic, family altars were strengthened, testimonies were given nightly, and conversations were marked with seriousness.

Edwin Orr's research revealed that in 1858-59 a million Americans were converted in a population of thirty million and at least a million Christians were renewed, with lasting results in church attendances and moral reform in society.

Charles Finney became one of the most famous preachers of that time. A keen sportsman and young lawyer, he had a mighty empowering by God's Spirit on the night of his conversion, including a vision of Jesus. During the height of the revival he often saw the awesome holiness of God come upon people, not only in meetings but also in the community, bringing multitudes to repentance and conversion. Wherever he travelled, instead of bringing a song leader he brought someone to pray. Often Father Nash, his companion, wasn't in the meetings but in the woods praying. Finney taught theology at Oberlin College which pioneered co-education and enrolled both blacks and whites. His 'Lectures on Revival' were widely read and helped to fan revival fire in America and England.

Revival swept Great Britain also. During September 1857, the same month the Fulton Street meetings began, four young Irishmen commenced a weekly prayer meeting in a village school near Kells. That is generally seen as the start of the Ulster revival of 1859 which brought 100,000 converts into the churches of Ireland.

Through 1858 innumerable prayer meetings started in Ireland. Revival was a common theme of preachers. God's Spirit moved powerfully in small and large gatherings bringing great conviction of sin, deep repentance, and lasting moral change. Prostrations were common - people lying prostrate in conviction and repentance, unable to rise for some time. By 1860 crime was reduced. Judges in Ulster had no cases to try on several

occasions. At one time in County Antrim no crime was reported to the police and no prisoners were held in police custody.

Edwin Orr noted that this revival made a greater impact on Ireland than anything known since Patrick brought Christianity there. By the end of 1860 the effects of the Ulster revival were listed as thronged services, unprecedented numbers of communicants, abundant prayer meetings, increased family prayers, unmatched scripture reading, prosperous Sunday Schools, converts remaining steadfast, increased giving, vice abated, and crime reduced.

Throughout 1859 the same deep conviction and lasting conversions revived thousands of people in Wales, Scotland and England.

Revival in Wales found expression in glorious praise including harmonies unique to the Welsh which involved preacher and people in turn. There too, 100,000 converts (one tenth of the total population) were added to the church and crime was greatly reduced.

Scotland and England were similarly visited with revival. Again, prayer increased enormously and preaching caught fire with many evangelists seeing thousands converted. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that prince of preachers, saw 1859 as the high water mark although he had already been preaching in London for five years with great blessing and huge crowds.

Twentieth century

The Welsh revival of 1904-1905 again impacted the whole nation. Evan Roberts in his twenties was one of God's agents in that national revival.

'For ten or eleven years I have prayed for revival,' he wrote to a friend. 'I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals.'

This young miner who then became a blacksmith attended church on Sunday, prayer meeting Monday, youth meeting Tuesday, congregational meeting Wednesday, temperance meeting Thursday, and class meeting Friday. Saturday night was free, probably as bath night in preparation for Sunday!

He offered for the ministry in 1903. Before entering the college he had a deep encounter with God and had a vision of all Wales being lifted up to heaven. After this he regularly slept lightly till 1 a.m., woke for hours of communion with God, and then returned to sleep. He was convinced revival would touch all Wales and eventually led a small band all over the country praying and preaching.

In October 1904 in his first year at the college he took leave to return home to challenge his friends, especially the young people.

The Spirit of God convicted people as Evan Roberts insisted:

1. You must put away any unconfessed sin.
2. You must put away any doubtful habit.
3. You must obey the Spirit promptly.
4. You must confess Christ publicly.

He believed that a baptism in the Holy Spirit was the essence of revival and that the primary condition of revival is that individuals should experience such a baptism in the Spirit.

Evan Roberts travelled the Welsh valleys, often not preaching but sitting head-in-hands earnestly praying. In Neath he spent a week in prayer without leaving his rooms. The revival packed the churches, but no one saw the revivalist all that week.

Churches filled. The revival spread. Meetings continued all day as well as each night, often late into the night or through to morning. Crowds were getting right with God and with one another in confession, repentance and restitution of wrongs done. People prayed fervently and worshipped God with great joy. Police had so little to do they joined the crowds in the churches, sometimes forming singing groups. Cursing and profanity diminished so much it caused slowdowns in the mines because the pit ponies could no longer understand their instructions and stood still, confused!

Edwin Orr noted that with less than a score of intercessors when it burst in October, the churches of Wales became crowded for more than two years. 100,000 were converted, drunkenness was cut in half, many taverns went bankrupt. Crime was so diminished that many judges had no cases to consider. The police became 'unemployed' in many districts. At least 80% of converts were still true after five years.

Similar revivals have catapulted the church into amazing growth throughout this century. The story is too vast to tell. A few highlights indicate something of this miraculous work of God.

Africa

Africa has seen many powerful revivals, such as the one in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) in 1914, reported by C. T. Studd. He said that the whole place was charged with a spiritual current. Many were falling, jumping, laughing, crying, singing, confessing sins and some shaking terribly. As he led in prayer the Spirit came down in mighty power sweeping the congregation. His body trembled with the power. He saw people literally filled and drunk with the Spirit.

Following independence in 1960 that country experienced a blood bath at the hands of rebels. Over 30 missionaries were martyred in Zaire in 1960-1965 as were hundreds of pastors and thousands of their members. Whole congregations were wiped out. In one place the Christians were driven into a church building and all burned alive. Yet the persecuted church of Zaire saw a remarkable revival. Born in agonising prayer and fanned by supernatural visitations of God, it grew in a powerful underground movement. The people, disillusioned with politics and appalled at the killings, turned to God in thousands.

Similarly, persecution in Uganda for eight terrible years following Idi Amin's coup in 1971, saw the church refined and aflame. In those years the Christians increased from 52% to around 70% of the twelve million population.

Many African revivals experience supernatural manifestations, visions, prophecies, and healings. Ethiopia had a powerful move of God in 1978.

Revived Christians survived the Mau Mau massacres in Kenya and the church continued to grow. For example, 700 new churches began in Kenya in 1980 alone, a rate of about two a day. Nigeria experienced revivals in 1983-1984, accelerating church growth there.

The New Life for All movement in Africa challenges Christians to pray daily for ten people until each is converted. Christians tell those people of their daily prayers for them. As each is converted a new name is added to the list to keep it at ten. The new convert does the same, praying daily for ten others. That simple commitment adds fuel to revival in Africa.

Outstanding leaders have emerged including men such as the Zulu Nicholas Bhengu. Fluent in Zulu, Xhosa, English and Afrikaans, this dynamic leader of the Back to God Crusade moved across southern Africa for 40 years and started over 1,000 churches through the mighty outpourings of the Holy Spirit.

Reinhard Bonnke, a German evangelist called to Africa, has led amazing crusades filled with the power of God in which thousands are converted, healed and delivered of evil spirits. His multi-racial team in Christ For All Nations crusades ministered in a 10,000 seater tent which was often too small. In 1980 alone 100,000 people made commitments to Christ in his crusades, and those huge numbers have continued and increased each year since. In 1983 he erected a tent seven storeys high which seats 30,000 and with which he plans to lead missions from Cape Town to Cairo.

Latin America

Tommy Hicks sparked revival in Latin America. In 1952 he was conducting a series of meetings in California when God showed him a vision. While he was praying he saw a map of South America covered with a vast field of golden wheat ripe for harvesting. The wheat turned into human beings calling him to come and help them.

He wrote in his Bible a prophecy he received about going by air to that land before two summers passed. Three months later, after an evangelistic crusade, a pastor's wife in California gave the same prophecy to him that he had written down. He had enough money to buy a one way air ticket to Buenos Aires.

On his way there after meetings in Chile, the word Peron came to his mind. He asked the air stewardess if she knew what it meant. She told him Peron was the President of Argentina. After he made an appointment with the Minister of Religion, wanting to see the President, he prayed for the Minister's secretary who was limping. He was healed. So the Minister made an appointment for Hicks to see the President. Through prayer the President was healed of an ugly eczema and gave Hicks the use of a stadium and free access to the state radio and press. The crusade was a spiritual breakthrough and led to a period of very rapid church growth in Argentina.

Edwin Orr visited each of the 25 states and territories in Brazil in 1952 seeing powerful moves of the spirit in his meetings which were supported by all denominations. The evangelical church council declared that the year of 1952 saw the first such general spiritual awakening in the country's history. Many meetings had to be moved into soccer stadiums, some churches increased in numbers by 50% in one week, and the revival movement continued in local churches in Brazil.

Many churches in Latin America are huge. By the eighties the Brazil for Christ Church in Sao Paulo seated 25,000 on a mile and a half of benches. The Jotabeche Methodist Pentecostal Church of Santiago in Chile has over 90,000 members. Now one of the largest fellowships in Argentina is the

Vision of the Future church pastored by Omar and Marfa Cabrera and a committed team of leaders. They had 30,000 in 1979. That grew to over 145,000 by 1988. The Cabrerias have a powerful personal and mass deliverance ministry, taking authority over demonic powers in areas and in people.

Korea

Revival in Korea broke out in 1907. Presbyterian missionaries, hearing of revival in Wales, and of a similar revival among Welsh Presbyterian work in Assam, prayed earnestly for the same in Korea. 1500 representatives gathered for the annual New Year Bible studies which saw a new spirit of prayer. The leaders allowed everyone to pray aloud simultaneously as so many were wanting to pray, and that became a characteristic of Korean prayer meetings. The delegates returning to their churches took with them this spirit of prayer which strongly impacted the churches of the nation with revival. Everywhere conviction of sin, confession and restitution were common.

Early morning daily prayer meetings became common, as did nights of prayer especially on Friday nights, and this emphasis on prayer has continued as a feature of church life there. Prayer and fasting is normal. Many churches have prayer retreats in the hills called Prayer Mountains to which thousands go to pray, often with fasting. Healings and supernatural manifestations continue.

Now the city of Seoul alone has 6,000 churches. Koreans have sent over 10,000 missionaries into other Asian countries.

Paul Yonggi Cho is senior pastor of a church with over half a million members, which sees 10,000 converts a month.

China

In 1950, missionaries expelled from China left behind one million evangelical Christians, and three million Catholics. For over 40 years the church in China has grown remarkably. This underground revival spread through thousands of house churches. Miracles, healings, visions and supernatural interventions of God marked this outpouring of the Spirit.

Many suffered and died in persecution. David Wang tells of a pastor imprisoned for over 22 years who left behind a church of 150 people scattered through the hill villages in northern China. On his release in the 1980's he discovered the church in that area had grown to 5,000. Three years later it had trebled to 15,000.

Mama Kwong, exiled in Japan because of her virile Christian witness, told how she helped to lead one million to the Lord through preaching and home cell meetings during 30 years of powerful leadership. Such leaders often faced long imprisonment or martyrdom, and her own son was nailed alive to a church wall, as were others. The blood of the martyrs is still the seed of the church in China.

Russia

Similarly in Russia, the church has grown in spite of persecution. Many Christians have remained part of underground groups, preferring anonymity. Recent developments have brought considerable relaxing of restrictions on Christian witness.

Sergie Kordakov, a teenage thug leader of tough marines, worked for the KGB. He broke up house churches or Christian home groups, arrested the pastors and beat the Christians, especially any young people found there. He was eventually converted through the witness of a young girl, Natasha, who kept coming to home groups inspite of being bashed. He noted how a revival was sweeping Russia involving many young people as well as older Christians.

The earnest prayers of suffering Christians through most of this century has been a significant part in more recent freedom to worship God experienced in Russia.

Indonesia

The Spirit of God brought revival to Indonesia during the troubled and politically uncertain times there in the sixties. Much of it happened outside the established church, with a later acceptance of it in some churches.

Thousands of animistic Muslims were converted, the biggest Christian impact on Islam in history. Over 100,00 were converted on the island of Java alone.

A Bible School in East Java experienced revival with deep repentance, confession, renunciation of occult practices, burning of fetishes and amulets and a new humility and unity among staff and students. The Lord led individual students and teams in powerful evangelism in many islands.

A team visited Timor and saw evidences of revival beginning which burst into unprecedented power in September 1965. This revival spread in the uncertain days following the attempted army coup on 30 September, 1965 in Indonesia. Four days previously a visitation from God had begun in Timor.

The revival touched the Reformed Church in Soe, a mountain town of about 5,000 people, on Sunday 26 September 1965. That night, as at Pentecost, people heard the sound of a tornado wind, and flames on the church building prompted police to set off the fire alarm. Like the burning bush, the church was not consumed! Healings and evangelism increased dramatically.

A rebellious young man had received a vision of the Lord who commanded him to repent, burn his fetishes, and confess his sins in church. He did. He challenged others to do the same. Hundreds did. He chose 23 young people who formed an evangelistic team, Team 1. They gave themselves full time to visiting churches and villages and saw thousands converted with multitudes healed and delivered. In one town alone they saw 9,000 people converted in two weeks.

About 90 evangelistic teams were formed which functioned powerfully with spiritual gifts. Specific directions from the Lord led the teams into powerful ministry with thousands becoming Christians. They saw many

healings, miracles such as water being turned to non-alcoholic wine for communion, some instantaneous healings, deliverance from witchcraft and demonic powers, and some people raised from death through prayer. Witchdoctors were converted after they saw the teams' prayers banish demons and leave the witch doctors powerless.

The teams, and especially their leaders, learned to listen to the Lord and obey him. He lead them in many biblical ways: sometimes audibly, often through visions, dreams, prophecies, inner convictions, scripture verses, specific circumstances, and confirmation from the church.

The Reformed Church Presbytery on Timor recorded 80,000 conversions from the first year of the revival there, half of those being former communists. They noted that some 15,000 people had been permanently healed in that year. After three years the number of converts had grown to over 200,000. In those three years over 200 evangelistic teams were formed. On another island where there had been very few Christians 20,000 became believers in the first three years of the revival.

The Spirit of the Lord moved most powerfully and the church grew most rapidly in those times of great tribulation, political upheaval and bloodshed. Revival continues in Indonesia in the nineties, with thousands being converted and baptised.

North America

Renewal and revival movements have stirred North America especially since the middle of the twentieth century.

Asbury College

A revival broke out in Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, on Tuesday 3 February 1970. God moved on the students at the regular 10 a.m. morning chapel in such a way that many came weeping to the front to kneel in repentance. Others gave testimonies including confession of sin. All this was mixed with spontaneous singing.

Lectures were cancelled for the day. The auditorium filled with over 1,000 people. Few left for meals. By midnight over 500 still remained praying and worshipping. Several hundred committed their lives to Christ that day. By 6 a.m. next morning 75 students were still praying there, and through the Wednesday the auditorium filled once more as lectures were again cancelled for the day. The day was spent in praying, singing, confessions and testimonies.

That week many students began going to other colleges and churches to tell about these events. Teams went out the next weekend to tell the story and give their testimonies. Eventually almost half the student body of 1000 was involved in the teams witnessing about the revival.

In the first week of the revival teams of students visited 16 states by invitation and saw several thousand conversions. After six weeks over 1,000 teams had gone from the college to witness, some of these into Latin America with finance provided by the home churches of the students. In addition, the neighbouring Theological Seminary sent out several hundred teams of their students.

The Jesus People

By June 1971 revival movements had spilled over into the society with thousands of young people gathering in halls and theatres to sing, witness and repent, quitting drugs and immorality. The pendulum had swung from the permissive hippie drop-outs of the sixties to a new wave of conversion in the seventies. Time magazine carried a cover article on the Jesus Movement.

Such national attention also attracted cultic followers of the movement, but amid the extremes revival kept spreading. Mass baptisms were held in the ocean with outdoor meetings and teams witnessing on the beaches and in the city streets. New church groups such as Calvary Chapel emerged which did not fit traditional denominations. Young people turned up to these churches in bare feet and old clothes as well as more traditional attire. Witnessing and evangelism burst spontaneously from lives changed by the love and power of God.

The Vineyard Christian Fellowships grew out of this revival movement in the seventies. In 1978 John Wimber began pastoring a home fellowship which his wife had commenced. It had grown to around 40 people. They moved into a gymnasium and grew rapidly. As John preached through Luke's gospel they began praying for healings. At first they saw no apparent healings although growth continued with beautiful worship, keen evangelism and loving care for people. Then healings began and have continued as people learned to pray in faith, responsive to God's leading.

God moved powerfully on the congregation one Sunday night when a young man preached and then called on the Holy Spirit to come. Many fell down with the Holy Spirit resting on them. Many spoke in tongues. Revival touched the Fellowship. They baptised 700 new converts in the next four months. Within a decade they had grown to around five thousand as well as becoming a movement of Vineyard Fellowships with an international impact in equipping God's people for powerful ministry.

In the nineties religious journals were again beginning to report similar revival developments, especially among young people in America.

Canada

Wilbert (Bill) McLeod, a Baptist minister in his mid-fifties, had seen many people healed in answer to prayer, often praying with a group of deacons. Bill invited the twin evangelists Ralph and Lou Sutera to speak at his church in Saskatoon. Revival broke out with their visit which began on Wednesday, 13 October 1971.

By the weekend an amazing spirit gripped the people. Many confessed their sins publicly. The first to do so were the twelve counsellors chosen to pray with enquirers. Numbers grew rapidly till the meetings had to be moved to a larger church building and then to the Civic Auditorium seating 2,000.

The meetings lasted many hours. People did not want to leave. Some stayed on for a later meeting called the Afterglow. Here people received prayer and counsel from the group as they continued to worship God and pray together. Humble confession of sin and reconciliations were common. Many were converted. These Afterglow meetings were a common feature of the revival in Canada.

Taxi drivers became amazed that people were getting cabs home from church late at night or early into the morning. Others were calling for taxis to take them to church late into the night as they were convicted by the Lord. Almost half those converted were young people. They gave testimonies of lives that had been cleaned up by God and how relationships with their families were restored. The atmosphere in many schools and colleges changed from rebellion and cheating to co-operation. Many Bible study and prayer groups formed in the schools and universities.

Criminals confessed their sins and gave themselves up to the police. Restitution was common. People paid long overdue bills. Some businesses opened new accounts for the conscience money being paid to them. Many who cheated at restaurants or hotels returned to pay their full bill. Stolen goods were returned.

Church feuds were resolved. Pastors confessed their rivalries and jealousies. Christians found a new radical honesty in their lives. People confessed pride and jealousies. Humility and love prevailed. As people prayed for one another with new tenderness and compassion many experienced healings and deliverance.

Not everyone welcomed the revival. Some churches remained untouched by it or hostile to it. This seems common to all revivals.

Bill McLeod visited Winnipeg in December 1971. He preached for only fifteen minutes, and didn't even give an invitation! When he announced the closing hymn a hundred people came out of their seats and knelt at the front of the church. Many were young, many in tears.

A Canadian inter-state truck driver was changed by God in the Winnipeg revival. On a Sunday morning in Iowa, U. S. A., he attended a church in his working clothes and was invited to tell about the revival. He was given half an hour to speak because the service normally ended at eleven o'clock. That day it went till 2.30 p.m. as he told of what God had been doing. The whole church was gripped by the Holy Spirit.

Bill McLeod and a team of six brought the revival to eastern Canada when they were invited to speak at the Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto. The meeting there began at 10 a.m. and went through till 1.15 a.m. next morning. Dinner was cancelled as no one wanted to leave. They did stop for supper, then went on again.

When the Sutera brothers commenced meetings in Vancouver on the West Coast on Sunday, 5 May 1972, revival broke out there in the Ebenezer Baptist Church with 2,000 attending that first Sunday. The next Sunday 3,000 people attended in two churches. After a few weeks five churches were packed.

The German speaking churches were also touched by the Canadian revival and by May 1972 they chartered a flight to Germany for teams to minister there.

Cambodia

In September 1973 Todd Burke arrived in Cambodia on a one week visitor's visa. Just 23 years old, he felt a strong call from God to minister there, the only charismatic missionary in the country. Beginning with two English classes a day, conducted through an interpreter, he taught from the Good News Bible. Those interested in knowing more about Jesus

stayed after class and he saw daily conversions and people filled with the Spirit and healed. Revival broke out in the war torn capital of Phnom Penh and rapidly spread to surrounding areas.

During that September Todd mounted a three day crusade in a stadium where thousands attended and hundreds were saved and healed supernaturally. A powerful church spread through a network of small house churches. Most pastors were voluntary workers while farming or holding city jobs. Todd met with these leaders at early morning prayer meetings every day at 6 a.m. Some cycled in from the country each morning. These pastors regularly saw healings, miracles and deliverance from demonic powers. New converts, filled with the power of the Spirit, soon began witnessing and praying for others.

When the country fell to the communists in 1975 the Burkes had to leave. They left behind an amazing church anointed by the power of God before it was buried by going underground to survive.

The Pacific

Revival has been spreading in Pacific islands, especially in the Solomons. Teams have gone from there to other countries such as Papua New Guinea and helped to light revival fires around the Pacific.

Muri Thompson, a Maori evangelist from New Zealand, visited the Solomons in July and August 1970 where the church had already experienced significant renewal and was praying for revival. Many of these Christians were former warriors and cannibals. They had been gradually won to Christ in spite of initial hostility and the martyrdom of early missionaries and indigenous evangelists.

Beginning at Honiara, the capital, Muri spent two months visiting churches and centres on the islands. Indigenous leaders and missionaries had experienced deep conviction and repentance, publicly acknowledging their wrong attitudes. It was very humbling. A new unity and harmony transformed their relationships. Little things which destroyed that unity were openly confessed with forgiveness sought and given.

Then in the last two weeks of these meetings the Spirit of God moved even more powerfully in the meetings with more deep repentance and weeping, sometimes even before the visiting team arrived. At one meeting the Spirit of God came upon everyone after the message in a time of silent prayer when the sound of a gale came above the gathering of 2000 people.

Multitudes were broken, melted and cleansed, including people who had been strongly opposed to the Lord. Weeping turned to joy and singing. Everywhere people talked about what the Lord had done to them. Many received healings and deliverance from evil spirits. Marriages were restored and young rebels transformed.

People were praying together every day. They had a new hunger for God's Word. They were sensitive to the Spirit and wanted to be transparently honest and open with God and one another.

Lectures in the Bible School were constantly abandoned as the Spirit took over the whole school with times of confession, prayer and praise.

Teams from these areas visited other islands, and the revival caught fire there also. Eventually pastors from the Solomons were visiting other Pacific countries and seeing similar moves of God there.

Pastors from the Solomon Islands spoke about their revival at a leaders conference in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Diyos Wapnok attended from the Baptist Mission area at Telefolmin. He heard God call his name three times in the night there and realised that the Lord was drawing his attention to some special challenge.

Later, one Thursday afternoon in 1977 at Duranmin in the rugged western highlands where Diyos was the principal of the Sepik Baptist Bible College, while he spoke to about 50 people they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and great joy. Revival had begun. It spread through the area with vibrant new enthusiasm. Conversions, Bible studies, prayer and healings of many kinds were common. The church grew and was strengthened. This revival movement spread to other areas as Diyos and others told of what God was doing.

In the Sepik lowlands of northern Papua New Guinea a new visitation of God burst on the churches at Easter 1984, again sparked by Solomon Island pastors. It too was characterised by repentance, confession, weeping and great joy. Stolen goods were returned or replaced, and wrongs made right.

The whole curriculum and approach at the Bible School for the area changed. Instead of traditional classes and courses, teachers would work with the school all day from prayer times early in the morning through Bible teaching followed by discussion and sharing times during the day to evening worship and ministry. The school became a community, seeking the Lord together.

Churches which have maintained a strong Biblical witness continue to stay vital and strong in evangelism and ministry, filled with the Spirit's power. Christians learn to witness and minister in spiritual gifts, praying and responding to the leading of the Spirit.

Jobson Misang, an indigenous youth worker in the United Church, reported on a further revival movement in the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea in 1988.

For some months he led weekend camps and conferences every weekend in different areas. Many thousands studied the 'Living in the Spirit' book (JBCE). Over 2,000 gave their lives to Jesus Christ.

Jobson listed some of the results of this revival:

1. During small group encounters, under the directions of Spirit-filled leadership, people began identifying their spiritual gifts, changing traditional ministry to body ministry.
2. Visions and dreams became a day to day experience shared during meetings and prayed about.
3. Local congregations met at 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. three days a week to pray and study the scriptures. In some areas this happened daily.
4. Miracles and healings took place when believers placed hands on the sick and prayed for them.

5. The financial giving of the Christians doubled. All pastors' wages were supported by the tithe.

6. Rascal activities (crimes) disappeared and some drinking clubs were overgrown by bushes.

7. The worship life was renewed tremendously, the traditional order of service being replaced by a much more lively and participatory one. Praise and worship was celebrated by clapping, dancing, and raising hands. Congregations would meditate and pray. When a word of knowledge was received they prayed about the message from the Lord and encouraged one another to act on it with sensitivity and love.

Problems encountered included division taking place within the church because of believers baptism, fault finding, tongues, objections to new ways of worship, resistance to testimonies, loss of local customs such as smoking or chewing beetlenut or no longer killing animals for sacrifices, believers spending so many hours in prayer and fasting and Bible studies, marriages where only one partner is involved and the other blames the church for causing divisions, pride creeping in when gifts are not used sensitively or wisely, and some worship being too unbalanced.

These revival movements continue to increase in the Pacific, especially as indigenous teams minister in other areas with the Spirit's fire. The church grows stronger, even through opposition. Indigenous Christians live and minister in New Testament patterns from house to house, from village to village.

Australia.

The story of revival among aborigines from 1979 has been told in this book by Djiniyini Gondarra and John Blacket. The pattern is similar to other revivals - prayer and expectation, the Spirit of God moving in new and powerful ways, repentance and confession on a wide scale, restitution of stolen goods and money, forgiveness and reconciliation between people, crime and drunkenness greatly diminished, renewed concern for justice and righteousness in the community, churches filled with Christians alive in the Spirit.

Here too, teams have travelled to other areas bringing some of the fire of revival to churches and communities. These churches have a vital Christian commitment and a strong impact on society.

Do we want God to give us revival? Will we humbly repent and pray for God's kingdom to come among us, renewing the church with refining fire and reviving God's reign in the community?

Lord engulf us in your holy fire. Burn our dross. Refine us. Ignite us, and multitudes in the land, for your glory, setting your church on fire.

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Appendix: Books

Renewal Journal Publications

See

www.renewaljournal.com

for Blogs on each book

PDF Boks, 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](#)

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:

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

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

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

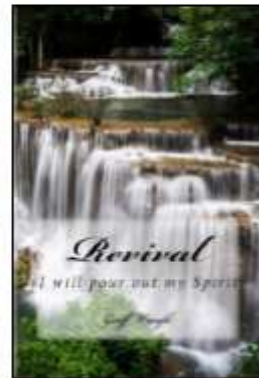
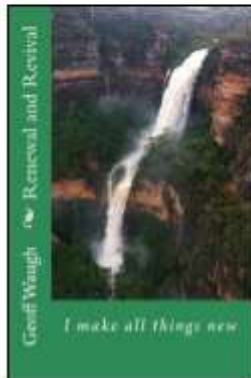
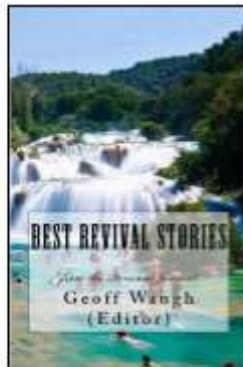
[*Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal & Revival* - Geoff's autobiography](#)

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

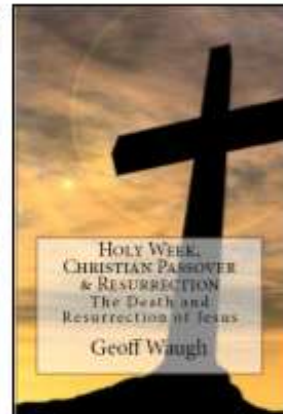
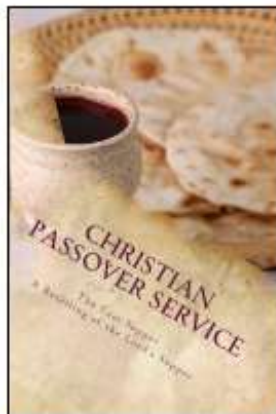
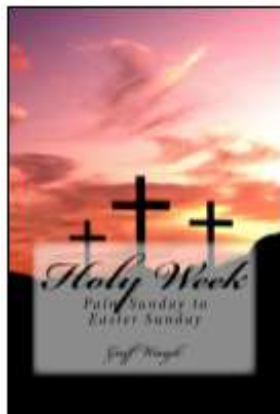
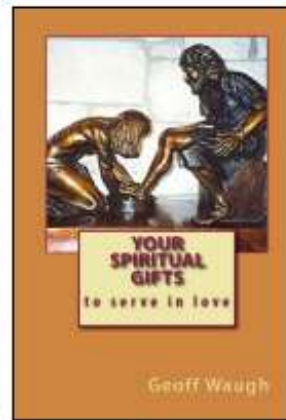
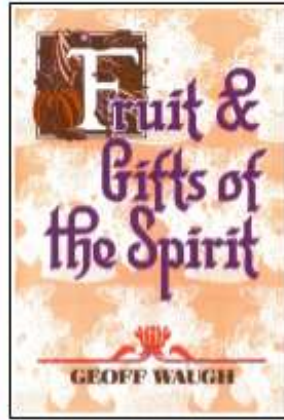
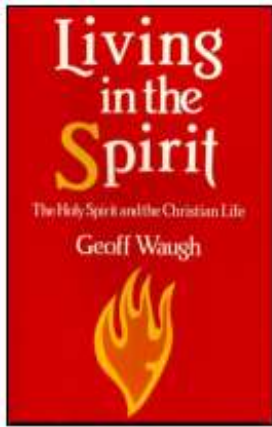
[*Journey into Mission*](#) – Geoff's mission trips

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

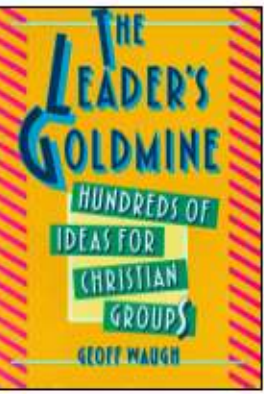
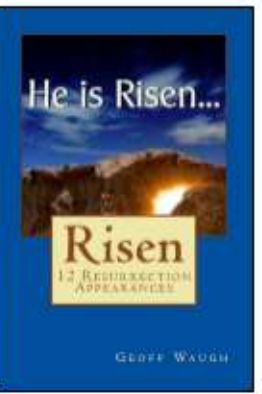
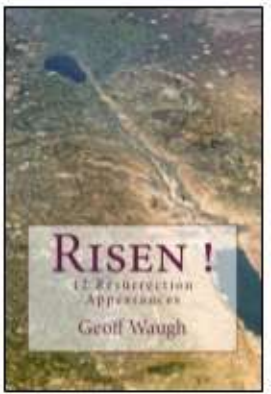
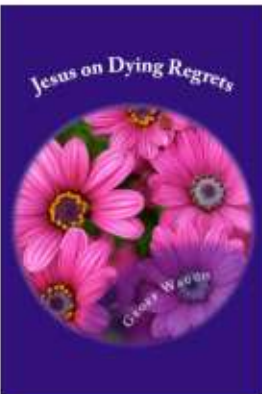
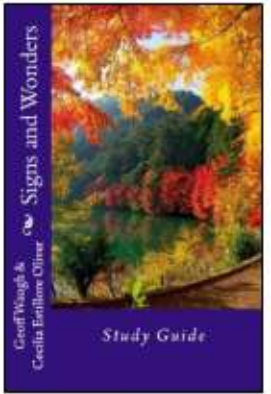
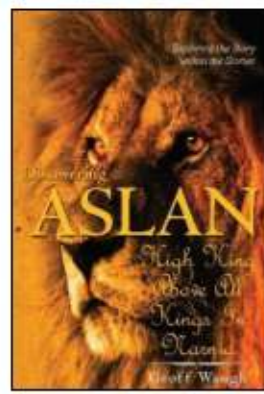
[*Travelling with Geoff* by Don Hill](#)



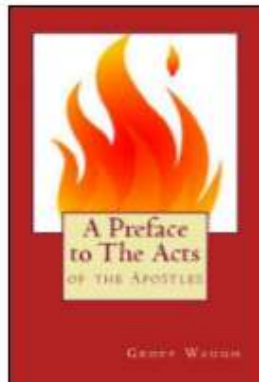
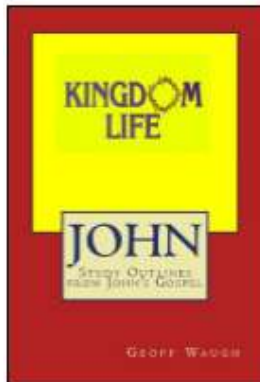
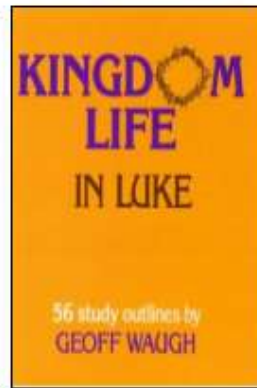
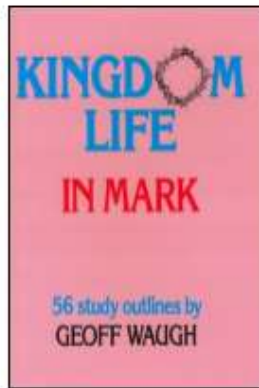
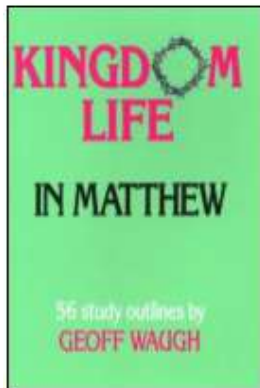
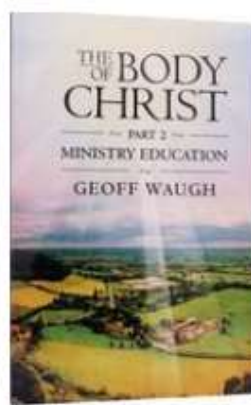
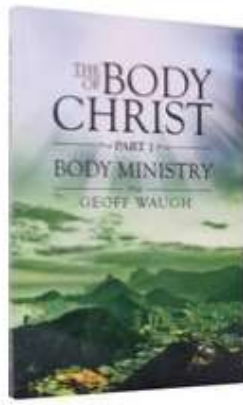
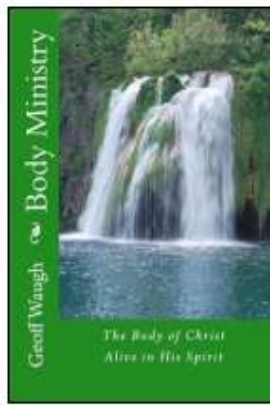
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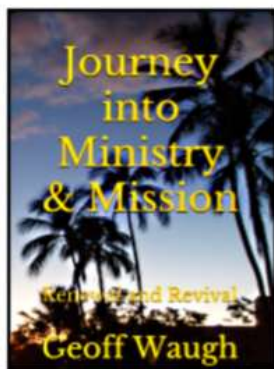
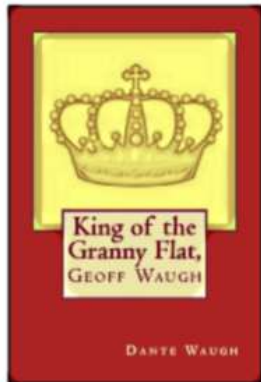
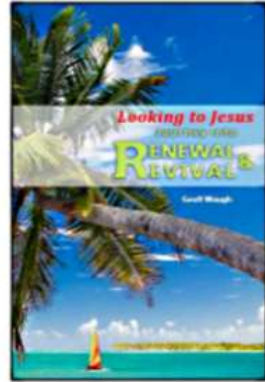
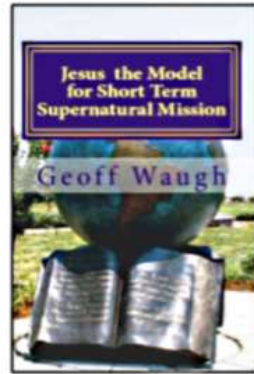
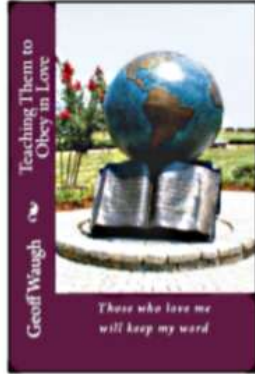
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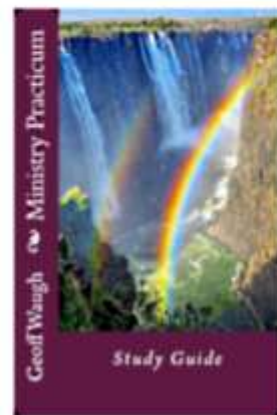
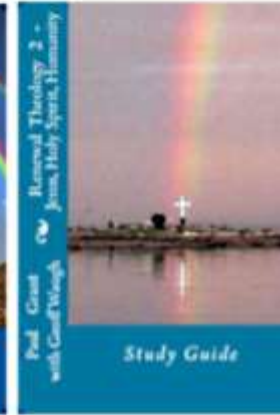
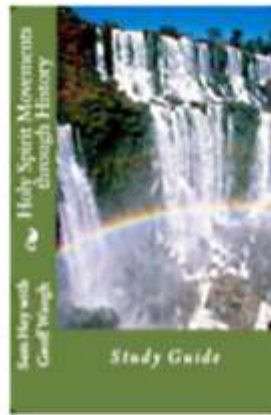
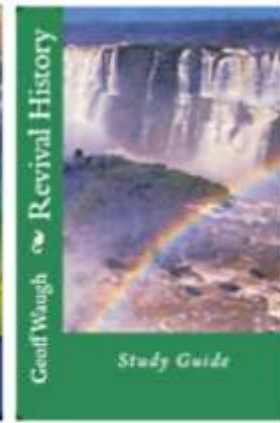
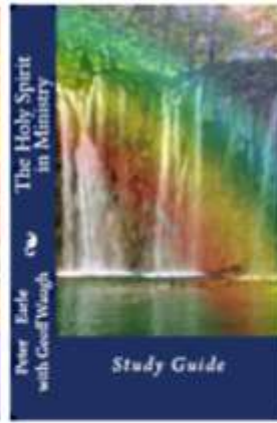
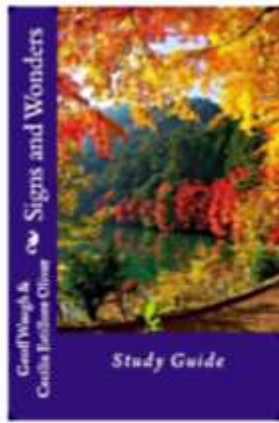
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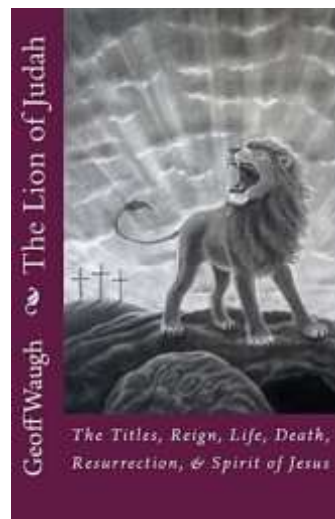
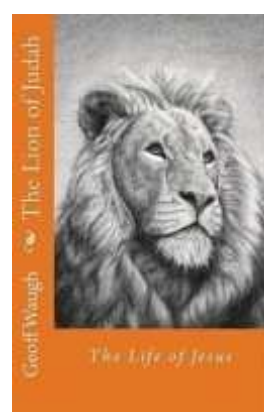
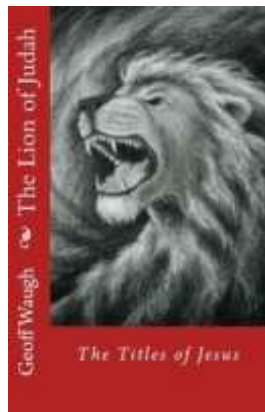
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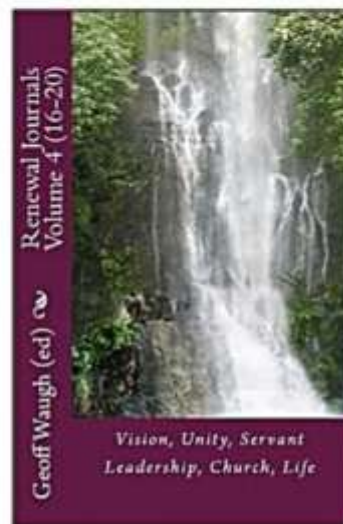
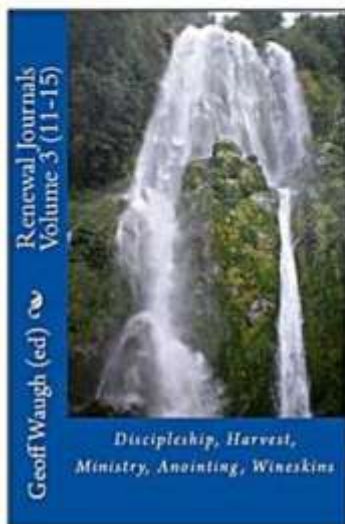
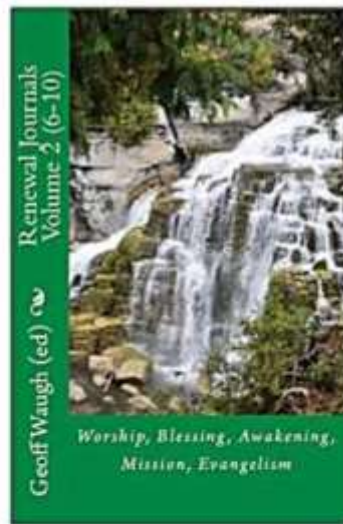
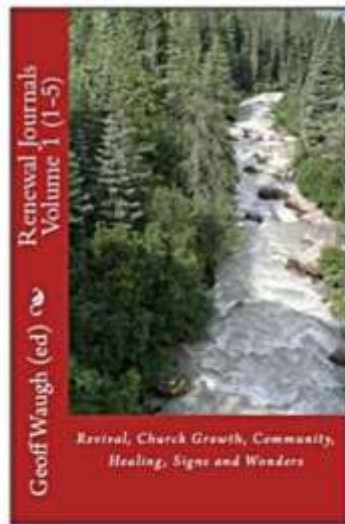
[Renewal Journal Publications](#)



[Study Guides](#)

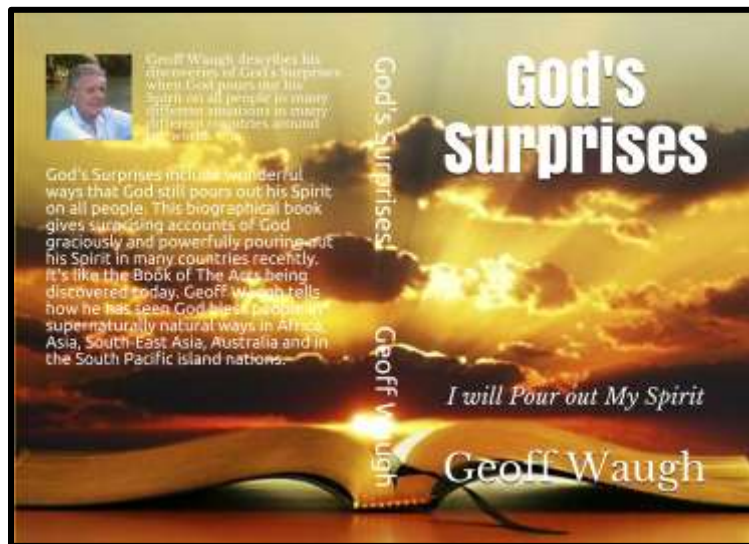


[The Lion of Judah Series](#)



[*Renewal Journals*](#)
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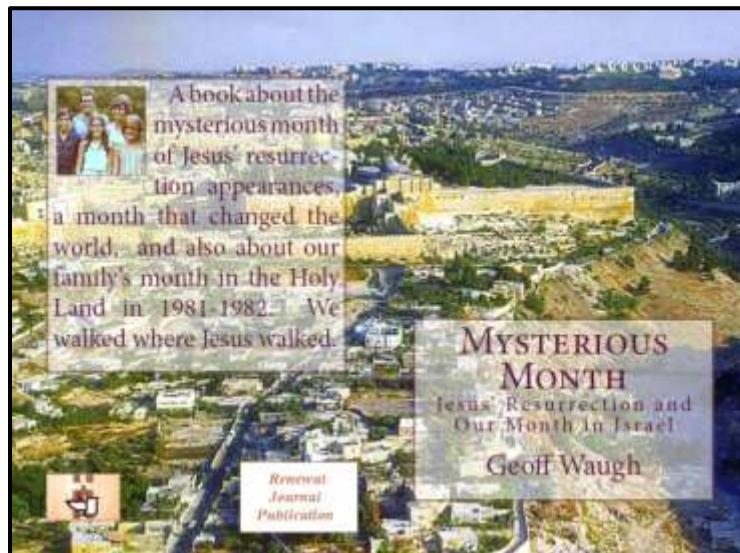
Double Page Book Covers



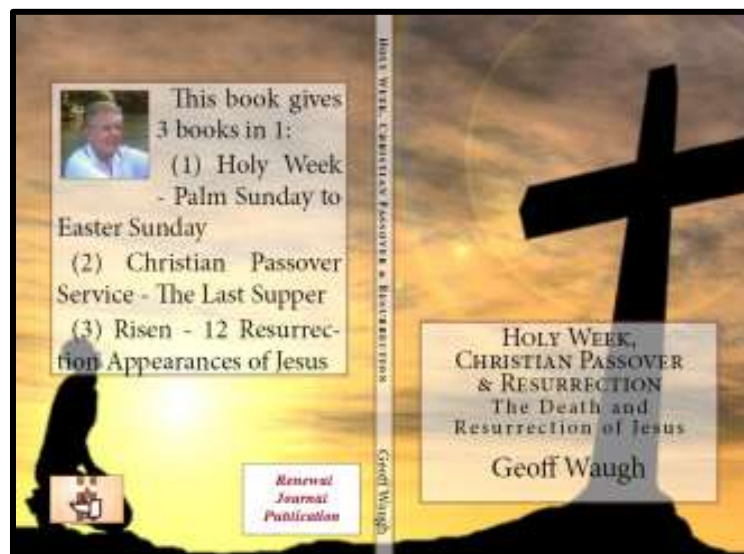
[God's Surprises](#)



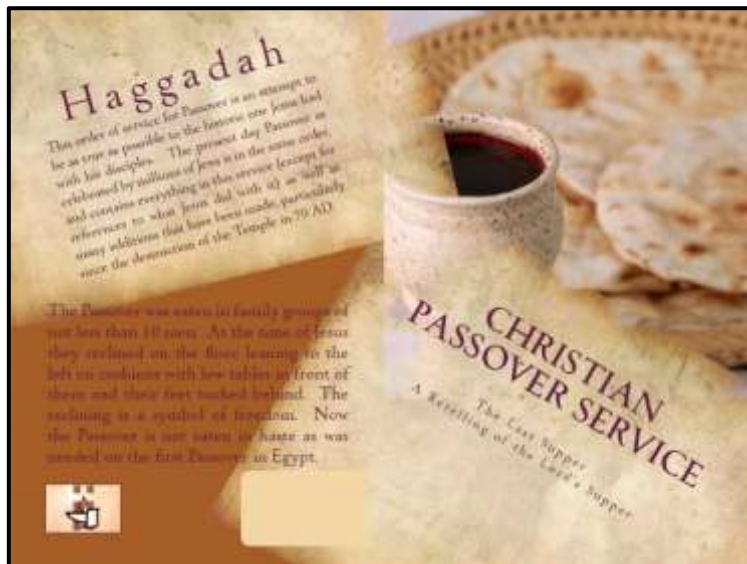
[Risen!](#)



[*Mysterious Month*](#)



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

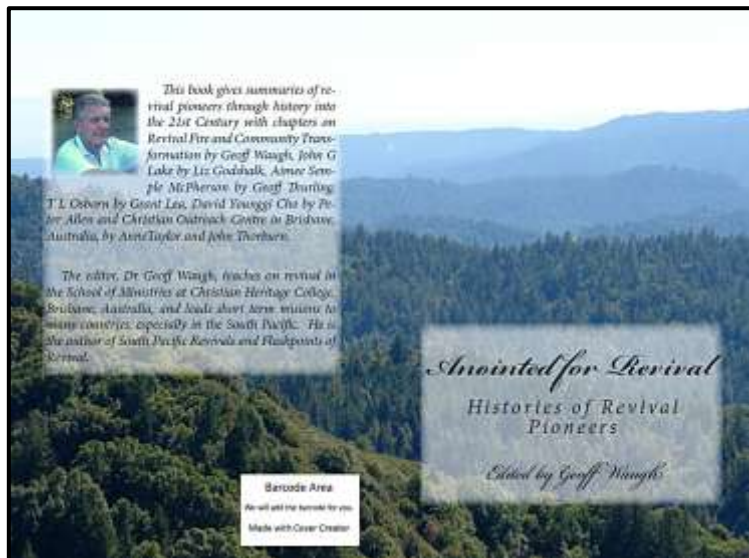


[Christian Passover Service](#)

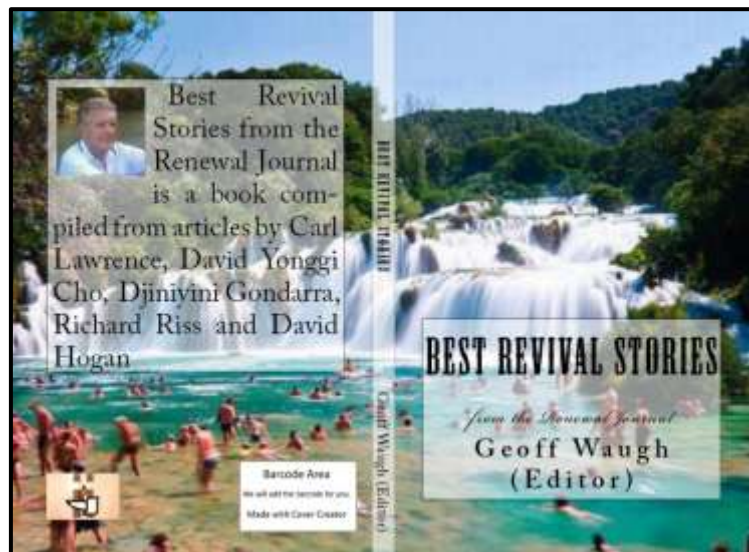
A Retelling of the Lord's Supper



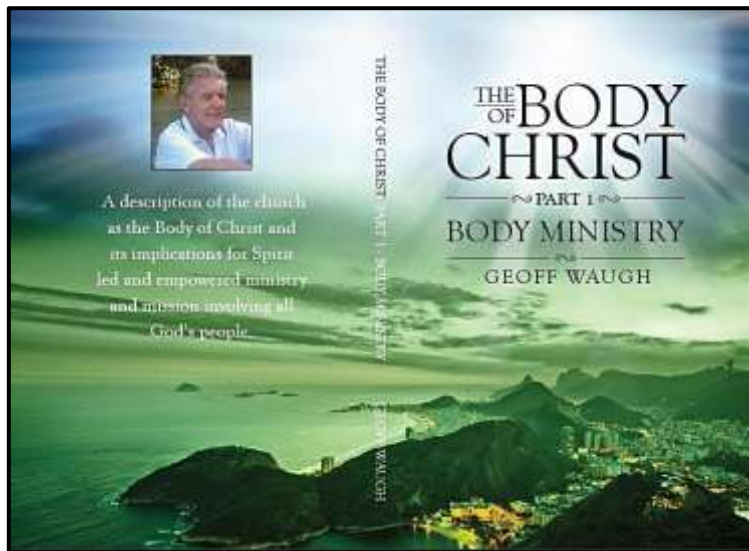
[The Christmas Message](#)



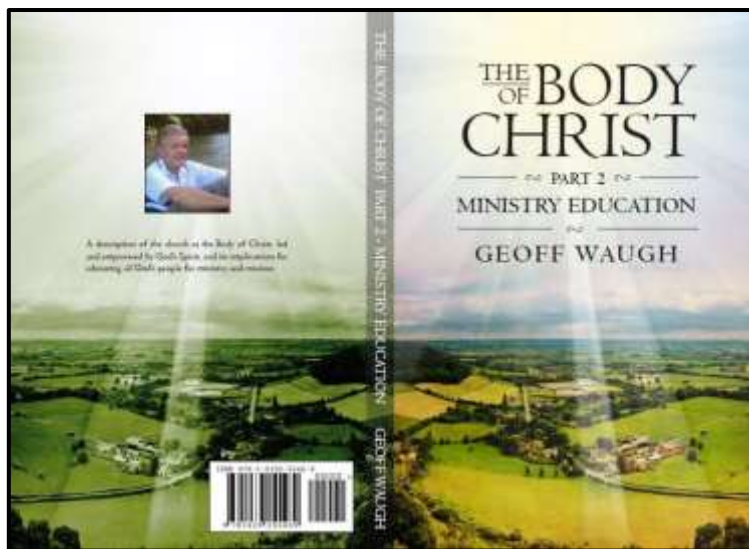
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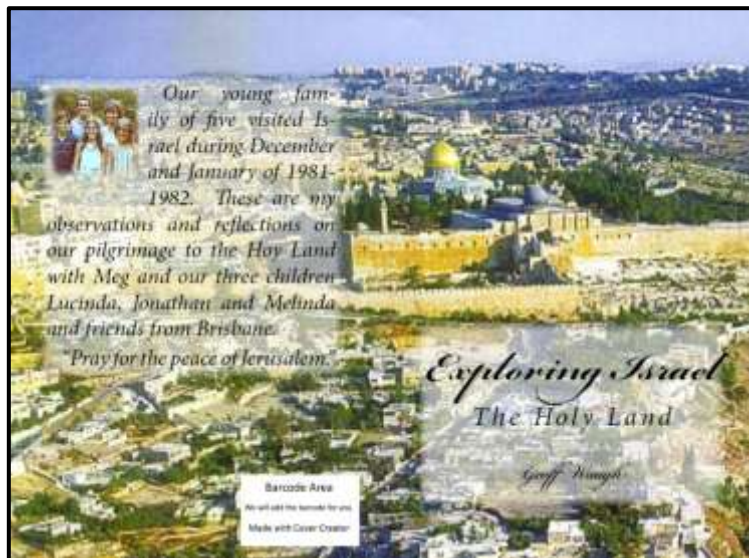
[*Best Revival Stories*](#)



[*The Body of Christ, Part 1: Body Ministry*](#)



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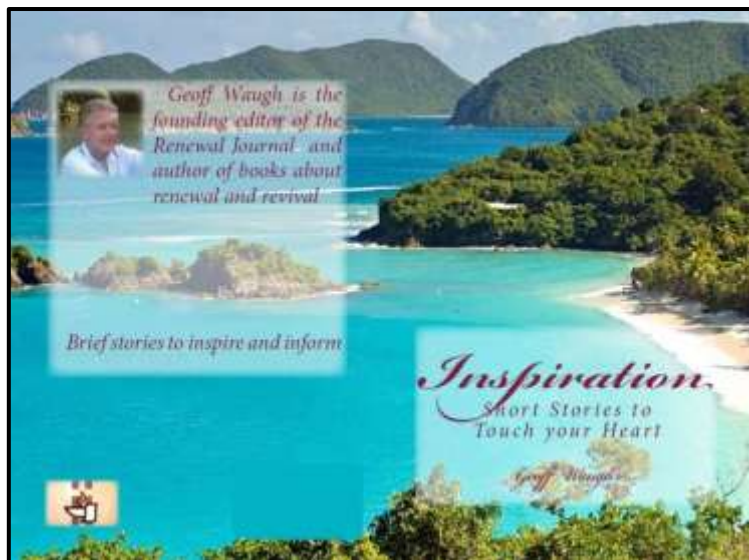
[Exploring Israel \(colour\)](#)



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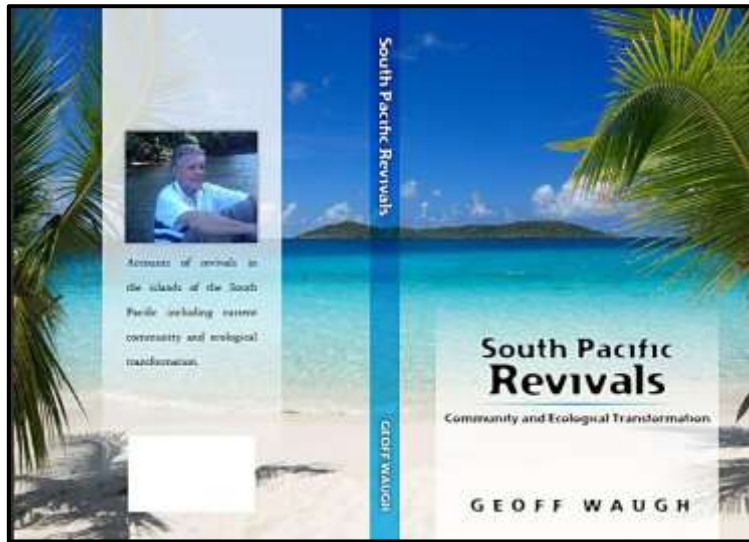
[Inspiration](#)



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



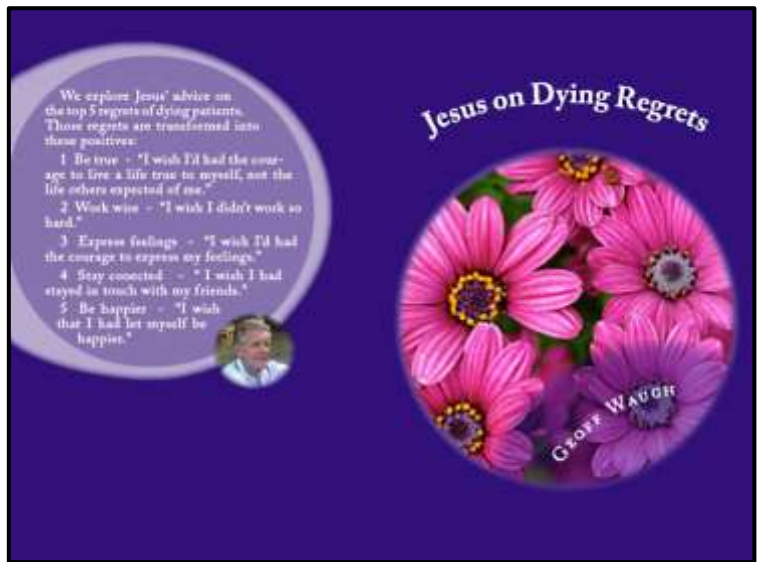
[Revival: I will pour out my Spirit](#)



[South Pacific Revivals](#)



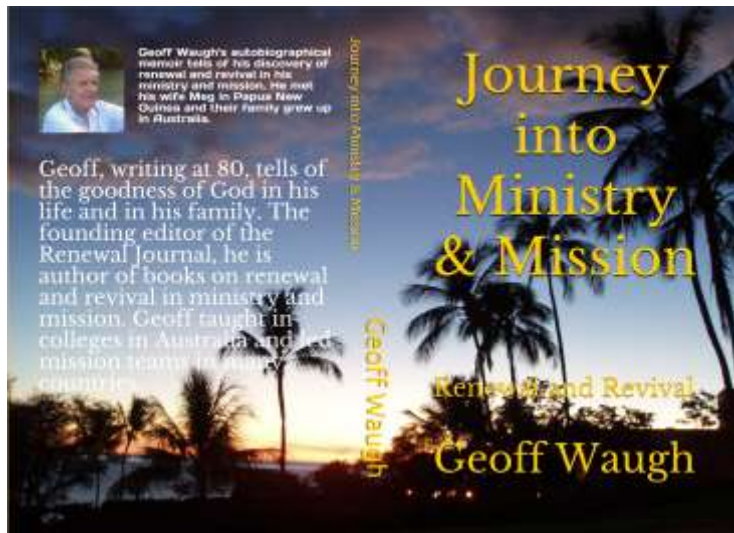
[Transforming Revivals](#)



[Jesus on Dying Regrets](#)



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



Journey into Ministry and Mission

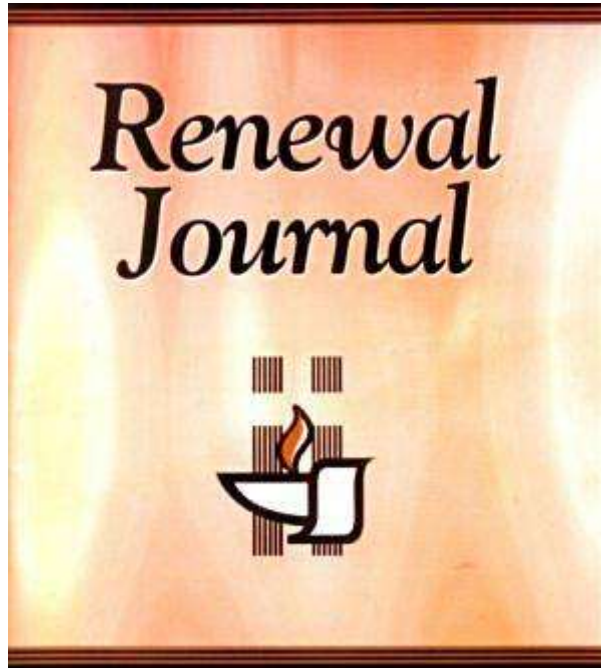
Condensed from two biographical books:

Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal & Revival

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