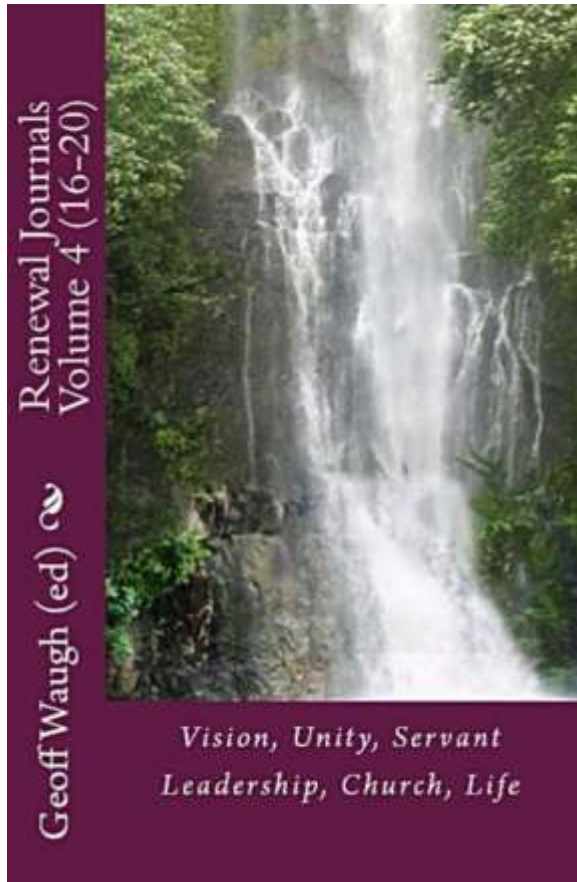


# *Renewal Journal*

## *Volume 4 (16-20)*

Vision – Unity - Servant Leadership - Church  
Life



*Geoff Waugh (Editor)*

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

## *Contents*

<b><i>16 Vision</i></b>	7
Editorial: Vision for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	9
1 Almolonga, the Miracle City, by Mell Winger	13
2 Cali Transformation, by George Otis Jr	25
3 Revival in Bogatá, by Guido Kuwas	29
4 Prison Revival in Argentina, by Ed Silvano	41
5 Missions at the Margins, Bob Ekblad	45
5 Vision for Church Growth, by Daryl & Cecily Brenton	53
6 Vision for Ministry, by Geoff Waugh	65
Reviews	95
<b><i>17 Unity</i></b>	103
Editorial: All one in Christ Jesus	105
1 Snapshots of Glory, by George Otis Jr.	107
2 Lessons from Revivals, by Richard Riss	145
3 Spiritual Warfare, by Cecilia Estillore Oliver	155
4 Unity not Uniformity, by Geoff Waugh	163
Reviews	191

<b>18 Servant Leadership</b>	195
Editorial: Servant Leadership	197
1 The Kingdom Within, by Irene Alexander	201
2 Church Models: Integration or Assimilation? by Jeanie Mok	209
3 Women in Ministry, by Sue Fairley	217
4 Women and Religions, by Susan Hyatt	233
5 Disciple-Makers, by Mark Setch	249
6 Ministry Confronts Secularisation, by Sam Hey	281
Reviews	297
<b>19 Church</b>	305
Editorial: Church Now	307
1 The Voice of the Church in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century, by Ray Overend	311
2 Redeeming the Arts, by Sandra Godde	327
3 Counselling Christianly, by Ann Crawford	339
4 Redeeming a Positive View of Sexuality, by John Meteyard and Irene Alexander	351
5 The Mystics and Contemporary Psychology, by Irene Alexander	363
6 Problems Associated with the Institutionalisation of Ministry, by Warren Holyoak	379
Reviews	389
<b>20 Life</b>	393
Editorial: Life and death	395
1 Life, death and choice, by Ann Crawford	397
2 The God who dies, by Irene Alexander	407
3 The Transforming Grace of Liminality, Anne Fry & John Meteyard	417
4 Primordial events in theology and science support a life/death ethic, by Martin Rice	431
5 Community Transformation, by Geoff Waugh	449
Reviews and Resources	459

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### **Cover Photo**

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood  
and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty  
come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as  
Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow  
from within them (John 7:37-38).

### **Renewal Journal Logo**

Ancient lamp and parchment scroll; also basin and towel  
– anointed ministry, in the context of the cross and the  
Light of the World.



## ***Great Revival Stories***

**Articles from *Renewal Journals*  
Compiled from two books:  
*Best Revival Stories*, and  
*Transforming Revivals***

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*Renewal Journal*  
*16 Vision*



*Geoff Waugh (Editor)*

***Renewal Journal***  
**16 Vision**

## ***Contents***

### ***Renewal Journal 16: Vision***

Editorial: Vision for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	9
1 Almolonga, the Miracle City, by Mell Winger	13
2 Cali Transformation, by George Otis Jr	25
3 Revival in Bogotá, by Guido Kuwas	29
4 Prison Revival in Argentina, by Ed Silvano	41
5 Missions at the Margins, Bob Ekblad	45
5 Vision for Church Growth, by Daryl & Cecily Brenton	53
6 Vision for Ministry, by Geoff Waugh	65
Reviews	95

**Cover Photo: 16 Vision**

Transformation in Almolonga, Guatemala.  
'Jesus is Lord of Almolonga'.



# ***Editorial***

## ***Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

A new millennium, like each new year, encourages vision. New hope. New possibilities. New vision.

Christian vision remains grounded in God's revelation of himself in Scripture, inspired and illuminated by his Spirit. So the vision is both old and new.

The vision is old because Jesus Christ is the same, "yesterday, today and forever". God's word hasn't changed with changing times. We have the same that God Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, Mary, Peter and Paul served.

They all served God in their time, their era. Now it's our turn, in our time, our era.

Ours is a very different world from their day. We communicate rapidly, globally. We fly globally for mission and holidays. We spend billions of dollars in Kingdom business.

So is there a vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

There must be. Where there is no vision, the people perish. Where there is no prophetic word the people cast off restraint. See Proverbs 29:18.

This issue of the Renewal Journal looks at some visions, directions and implications for serving God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The essentials remain the same. God is. Jesus saves. The Holy Spirit moves in all the earth. The church grows – with endless cultural and social expressions. Yet still the Lord only recognises one church – his.

All over the world powerful expressions of the church have emerged at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is not triumphalism. But it is war. Jesus is still building his church and smashing through the gates of hell.

Mell Winger, missionary to Latin America, tells the astounding story of Almolonga, Guatemala, the “Miracle City”. There the Christians have united in prayer and seen the powers of darkness dramatically overcome. The four jails, once packed, are now empty – closed. The curse on the land has been broken and they grow the biggest and best food in the world. Families, once at war, are united in loving service.

George Otis Jr., producer of the vivid, prophetic video *Transformations*, tells how Cali, Columbia, has been transformed through united repentance and prayer. Once the centre of billions of dollars in drug trafficking with a turnover of over 400 million US dollars a month, it is now transformed. What global law enforcement agents could not do, God has done.

Guido Kuwas describes revival in Bogotá, Columbia – another transformations story. A church is impacting the whole city and region by applying Jesus’ principles of discipleship. Christian disciple just 12 people. Very effectively. They gather in huge areas to celebrate together.

Ed Silvosio describes revival in Argentina’s largest prison, and Bob Ekblad shows the dramatic effects of working with the marginalized and despised in the power of the Spirit.

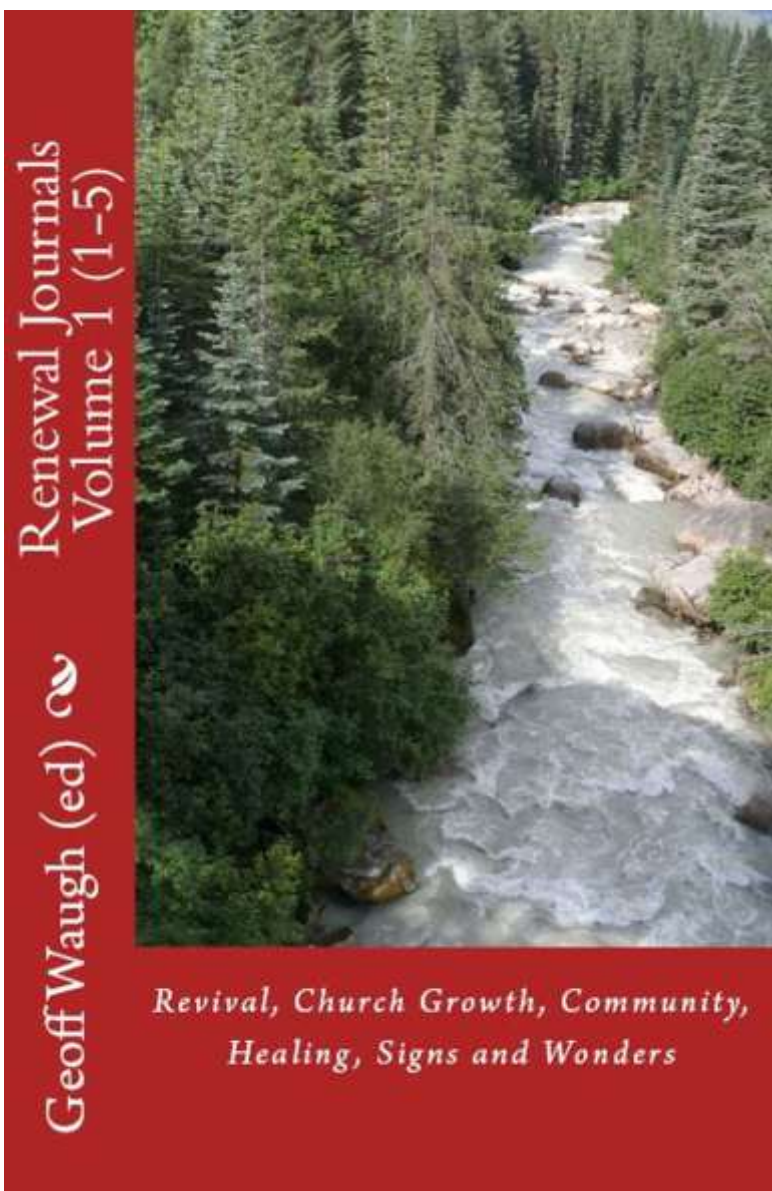
Daryl and Cecily Brenton, missionary translators in Papua New

Guinea, comment on the world's largest data base of church growth factors to draw conclusions about effective mission and evangelism.

I condensed my research on the emerging church into an article surveying the dramatic and powerful global shifts going on in church life and ministry amid accelerating change today.

Gene Wilkes' book *Jesus on Leadership* challenges our usual ideas of leadership in the church by examining how Jesus led.

We hope you find this issue of the *Renewal Journal* inspiring and informative, and that you can recommend it to your friends and your church!



*Renewal Journals  
Volume 1 (1-5)*

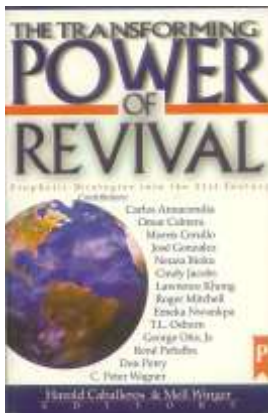
*Geoff Waugh (ed)* 

*Revival, Church Growth, Community,  
Healing, Signs and Wonders*

***Renewal Journals, Volume 1 (1-5)***  
***Revival, Church Growth, Community,  
Healing, Signs and Wonders***

# *1 Almolonga, the Miracle City*

## **Mell Winger**



Dr Mell Winger, director of the Bible Institute at El Shaddai Church in Guatemala City, Guatemala, writes about Almolonga, a city in Guatemala transformed by God's power. This article is reproduced with permission from Chapter 17 of *The Transforming Power of Revival*, edited by Harold Caballeros and Mell Winger

**Before and after:** two simple words frequently used to describe a city in western Guatemala named Almolonga. The locals consistently refer to their city in terms of two eras: before the power of God came in the mid- 1970s, and after, when it is reported that 90% of the 18,000 residents became born-again Christians. The way the people of Almolonga say “before” is reminiscent of how others might say, “in the dark ages.”

**After:** The word signals a new epoch for the city, marked by family harmony, prosperity and peace in the Holy Spirit. The contrast is stark and real to these people who remember how, just 25 years ago, demons, fear, poverty, disease, idolatry, and alcohol dominated their region and their families.

Some call Almolonga the “Miracle City” because of the radical transformations in many dimensions of this ethnically Quiché society (descendants of the Mayans). Some Christian leaders say Almolonga is the best example they’ve seen of how intercession, spiritual warfare, and evangelism can transform a community.

Driving into Almolonga, one is immediately struck by the brilliant green hues of the fertile fields spreading throughout this magnificent valley. Even before the onset of the rainy season, when much of the Guatemalan landscape is still dry, Almolonga remains vibrant and lush. Hence, Almolonga is nicknamed “America’s Vegetable Garden”.

### **A weak church**

But it wasn’t always so. About 25 years ago, the Church was small and weak, the fields were undeveloped and the city was characterized by an alcohol-induced lethargy - the fruit of serving an idol named Maxirnon. This perverse idol is associated with the vices of smoking, drinking liquor, and immorality. Maximon is a 3-foot idol consisting of a clay mask and a wood and cloth body. He receives the kisses of the faithful who kneel before him. Placing at his feet bottles of liquor purchased with their meagre earnings, they hope against hope that their offering will bring blessing and healing. The priest offers lit cigars to the idol, and taking a mouthful of the liquor offering, spews it over the devotees. The followers leave expecting a blessing, perhaps receiving a demonic display of power, but nonetheless slipping deeper and deeper into an abyss of oppression.

Sadly, his influence is so strong that he is considered the patron saint and protector of many Guatemalan mountain villages. In addition to serving Maximon, many of the residents of Almolonga once sought the blessing of other idols as well. Pastor Genero Riscaiché, one of the pastors at Almolonga’s largest church, Mission Evangelical Monte Calvario, notes, “Before, this was a very idolatrous town. There were many different types of idols. Many worshipped the silver image of Almolonga’s patron saint, San Pedro.”

But in 1974-75 the Kingdom of God dramatically started clashing with Maximon and the ruling powers of darkness controlling Almolonga. Following the pattern of historic revivals, God first began this community transformation in the heart of one of his consecrated servants. Mariano Riscaiché (no relation to Genero), now the pastor of El Calvario Church, was a typical young man of Almolonga who sought the protection and blessing of idols before he encountered the living God.

At his conversion, Pastor Mariano heard the Lord say, "I have elected you to serve Me." He said it was like waking from a dream; his understanding was opened and the promises of the Bible became real. Pastor Mariano's burning desire was to see people come to Christ and find freedom. Then, one by one, his own family was saved.

### **Power encounters**

A new season of power encounters with Maximon began shortly after Pastor Mariano's surrender to Christ. Mariano and other pastors in town, such as Guillermo Satey, founding and senior pastor of Mission Evangelical Monte Calvario, saw more than 400 people delivered from demons. When believers asked a demon to identify itself, "Maximon" was sometimes uttered by the oppressed one. This mass deliverance was similar to the book of Acts where people burned their possessions that linked them to a past consumed by witchcraft and idolatry. "Those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them." (Acts 19:19, NASB). The eviction of these demons not only brought freedom to individuals, but the spiritual oppression over the city began to lift as well.

The early days of spiritual warfare were extremely intense. Those being set free were sometimes thrown across the room, and at times coughed up blood. The Church continued steadfast in intercession, spiritual warfare, and evangelism as the name of Jesus was demonstrated to be the dominant force in this battle. Pastor Mariano asserts that the enemy had to be confronted directly and boldly.

One of those set free from demonic control was a powerful priest of Maximon named José Albino Tazei. Many people in Almolonga sought him out to heal their illnesses, foresee their future, and to bless their businesses. But one night, José, near death after a month-long drinking binge, cried out to God to save him. At 11:00 pm, José woke his family to share the glorious news of his new-found freedom in Christ. In repentance, the family burned all of their idols and witchcraft paraphernalia. The following day José went to the mountains to fast and seek the Lord.

Witnessing this well-known slave to witchcraft come to Christ intensified the Church's intercession for God to transform not only individuals like José, but their whole community as well.

Before his conversion José would abandon the family for eight to ten days at a time to drink and conduct witchcraft activities for Maximon. He often left his family without any money for food. As his dedication to Maximon grew, so did his addiction to alcohol.

José's oldest daughter, Francisca, grimaces and lowers her voice as she recounts the memory of herself and the other children kneeling before Maximon, burning candies and bringing their offerings. But quickly she diverts the subject to "after we surrendered to Jesus" and joyfully asserts that God changed everything 24 years ago. She proudly inserts, "We were some of the first converts during the mid 70s."

"Before we received Christ, we didn't have any money, little food, or a decent house, and only clothes discarded by others," she continues. "My father started seeking God and fasting. He began a business and started working diligently. Now, God has given us a house, a small store, and a calm, hard-working, godly father."

Francisca recounts, "The church accepted us and didn't leave us in the middle. They loved us and visited us, and really struggled with us as we became established in Christ." This care for new converts is one of the key ways God has used to maintain and deepen the effects of this revival.

As his grip started loosening, the evil one instigated a persecution



against the Church. Some merchants would not even sell food to believers recently set free from the old ways. Enemies of the Gospel would go into church and do witchcraft to disrupt the services. The believers suffered under this backlash for years, but one particular incident stands out in Pastor Mariano's memory. Six men attacked him, tying his hands behind his back. They knocked his front teeth out, then one man shoved a gun in his mouth. Pastor Mariano prayed for God to cover him, and as the Lord's presence descended he heard the "click... click... click" of the gun, unable to fire. Bewildered by this divine intervention, his attackers ran away.

Pastor Genero, a native of Almolonga, describes the early resistance to the Gospel as follows: "If a person from outside Almolonga came to someone's home to share the Gospel, people would kick them out of their house with sticks, stones, and even shovels. It was terrible! They didn't view the Gospel as Good News, but as something offensive. Unbelievers circulated rumours about the Church and accused the Christians of being lazy." Some of the unbelievers threw stones at houses where the church met for prayer. Pastor Genero notes, "Many of those who threw stones are now leaders in the church. Things have now changed, for even the non-Christians respect the Gospel."

As one who has pastored a little over one year in Almolonga, Pastor Joel Pérez agrees and says, "Even unbelievers in Almolonga recognize the marvellous work of God. These few unbelievers acknowledge that the advances in their society and agriculture are due to the Gospel. They do not resist the Church now, as we heard about in the early days. More than once, I have been eating in a restaurant and someone has said, "You are a pastor, aren't you? I'm not a Christian, but let me buy your lunch.""

Since the power of God started transforming the community, crime has taken a definite downturn. Donato Santiago, chief of police, can sometimes be spotted resting in the shade during market days. Armed with a whistle, this tranquil brother has seen it all during his 23 years as a policeman in Almolonga. "We used to average 20 to 30 people in jail each month," he recounts." Crowds would gather just to watch the drunks fight. It seemed like I had no rest. I was often awakened in the middle of the night to stop family violence.

Before, we had four jails and that was insufficient to adequately house all of our prisoners,” Donato recalls. “Things were so bad we enlisted around a dozen citizens at night to help the officers patrol the streets. But now things are different! The people have changed their attitudes. Crime has risen in many places over the past 20 years, but not here in Almolonga.”

What accounts for this dramatic change in the townspeople? Donato is quick to respond, “The Word of God! Once people were converted they changed their customs and left behind drinking. They gained respect in the community. Day by day the rest followed and joined the church because of the changes they saw in the lives of Christians. People living with a deep respect for God accounts for the changed attitudes. Crime and drinking are now viewed by the people as a waste of time and a waste of money.”

The last jail closed in 1989! Now remodelled and called “The Hall of Honour,” it’s a place for celebrating weddings, receptions, and community events. In addition to the drop in the crime rate, great societal changes can also be observed by the absence of prostitutes and the number of bars turned into small stores with new names like “Little Jerusalem” and “Jehovah Jireh.” Before, there was a house of prostitution and people often waited in line to get into the packed bars. “There was even a custom in which we threw a party and gave alcohol (in small portions) to the little ones,” says Pastor Genero. In the 1970s, 34 cantinas did a brisk business in Almolonga; today there are only three. After the bars started shutting down, a new one opened but the owner closed the doors when he met the Lord three months later. He now plays in a Christian band called “Combo Israel.”

## **Miracles**

God’s mercy over Almolonga is evidenced in many ways, but one often-repeated display of grace is the incredible number of miracles. Many have come to Christ through signs and wonders. Teresa and her family found new life in Christ after she received a last-chance miracle. In 1984, the incision from her poorly performed Cesarean section became infected. This gangrenous state progressed to the point where she couldn’t eat; drinking was

extremely difficult.

Teresa continued to weaken. Different doctors each said that she was in a very dangerous state. Valeriano, her husband, remembers the days of just hopelessly waiting for her to die. She died about 10:00 pm one night. Her husband checked for a pulse and placed a mirror beneath her nostrils to see if she was breathing, but there were no signs of life. For three hours she lay motionless. Grief stricken, at 1:00 AM Valeriano went to look for Pastor Mariano to make funeral preparations. As Pastor Mariano and Valeriano were walking back to the house, Pastor Mariano heard the unmistakable voice of the Lord saying, "Do not prepare for the funeral; pray for her. I will lift her up."

Pastor Mariano recalls coming into the home seeing distraught people frantically running back and forth. He grabbed Valeriano and they began to pray for God's miraculous intervention. After 10 minutes, Teresa suddenly began stirring. Her colour returned and she sat up on the bed! Valeriano was astounded at this display of God's power. Pastor Mariano began to preach the Gospel to all the neighbours and family who had gathered at the home that night. And in the days that followed, many believed.

Teresa's strength was restored day by day. In deep gratitude, she and Valeriano also gave their lives to Christ. Now people come to their home to receive prayer for healing. Remembering her miracle inspires faith when Teresa prays for others; she has witnessed many miracles as a result. Valeriano now preaches the Gospel and testifies of a miracle working Heavenly Father. He joyfully says, "God is the only one who is on our side and only he can do these miracles."

Just as Valeriano and Teresa's family opened their hearts to the Gospel after this powerful miracle, in many cases the revival has spread through family units. Pastor Mariano articulates a truth held dear in Almolonga when he says, "True success is when your whole family comes to the Lord." Therefore believers seriously fast and pray to bring their family into God's family.

## **Families redeemed**

Although the women still weave and wear the beautiful indigenous dresses and carry heavy loads upon their heads (like Quiché women have for hundreds of years), they walk in a new dignity - a result of the redemption of the family. Prior to God's inbreaking, Pastor Genero recalls, "The majority of men drank and the homes were disorderly. Neglect and physical abuse were rampant. It was common for men to hit their wives, sometimes even with sticks."

"The family system before was at the bottom," comments Pastor Francisco Garcia of Iglesia de Dios de la Profecia Universal. Women were largely viewed simply as servants. Pastor Genero comments, "Before, the custom was that only the men would study. We believed that schools were not for women. Since the Gospel came, we teach that both sexes have the same opportunities. Today we see some women who are professionals."

Ramon Cotzoy's wife recalls the earlier days. "My husband would sometimes treat me harshly and try to throw me out of the house. Things have changed. Now he is a humble man of God."

Ramon admits that he neglected and mistreated his family prior to surrendering to Christ. Now he ministers to men in the community and exhorts them to stop drinking and start loving their families. Ramon observes, "Because the unbelievers see the peaceful example of how the Christian men are living with their families, they are treating their wives better now."

"Today there is more communication within families and very little abuse in Almolonga. In the church, we teach a lot on biblical family orientation," says Pastor Genero. "Couples solve their problems through dialogue and communication."

This renewal of family harmony has opened the way for the Spirit of God to span the generations and impact all age groups, including the youth and children. The youth do not view Christianity as simply something for the older people. There is a new thrust of youth-motivated home groups with the focus to bring the remaining unsaved youth in the city to Christ. Pastor Joel observes, "The youth are getting hold of God. In different churches some of

the youth groups even go on special fasting retreats.”

Chief of Police Santiago says, “The parents are taking better care of their children now.” Santiago explains why there aren’t teens loitering around town. “The youth work hard to buy farm trucks. This atmosphere of diligent work is the best atmosphere to grow up in.”

Seeing the youth and children cheerfully working alongside their parents in the fields and marketplace evokes a smile in visitors to Almolonga. Pastor Mariano’s father, one of the oldest men in the city, observes, “Everyone in Almolonga works. Even the 12-15-year olds fill a truck with vegetables to sell. They throw themselves into God and into their work.”

### **Community transformation**

This work ethic has produced an economic renewal, an incredible dimension of community transformation throughout Airnolonga. There is no evidence of the unemployment, the beggars, the drunkards asleep in alleyways, or the loiterers that so often characterize similar places. In other cities around this region people often appear exhausted with life. Not so in Almolonga. The people’s diligence and tenacity have seen this valley come alive with multiple harvests each year. Celery, leeks, cauliflower, turnips, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, radishes, and watercress thrive under the skilful care of Almolonga’s farmers. These vegetables are often incredibly larger than the size of those grown in the surrounding villages. Pastor Joel attributes this agricultural blessing to the Lord of Glory. He mentioned a time when agronomists from the U.S.A. visited Almolonga to test their scientific principles to produce better crops. The result? Pastor Joel says, “The wisdom God gave the farmers of Almolonga produced more than the scientific methods yielded.”

A subterranean stream provides a constant source of water for the farms. These lucrative products have elevated the lifestyles of many of the believers. Pastor Mariano’s father was one of the former bar owners who now runs a tienda (small store) and raises vegetables. He reports that the greatest changes in commerce came

in the 80s because the farmers not only quit spending their money on liquor, but they began to incorporate principles from God's Word, saving and investing their profits. Before the farmers would farm just enough to support their drinking habit; they had no vision beyond that.

Then God started giving the farmers understanding. They began to plan ahead and invest in topsoil and fertilizers. Some farmers have even paid cash for Mercedes trucks, emblazoning them with names like *Regalito de Dios* ("Little Gift from God"). Many farmers have now hired others to work their fields. They are even developing farms in the surrounding communities as they shift from being farmers to businessmen. Mariano's father marvels, "We never dreamed of selling our produce outside of Guatemala, but now we export to other nations."

### **Church unity**

Since this relatively small town has so many growing churches, a question often arises concerning the relationship between the pastors. Pastor Joel describes the fellowship among pastors as "a tight fraternity of ministers." He further notes, "We have an agenda of prayer and fasting. We go outside the city to a hill to pray and earnestly seek the Lord ... When we have little things come up or if the enemy tries to interrupt our unity, we quickly restore it through seeking the Lord for more souls to come into the Kingdom."

Pastor Genero says, "Presently we are strengthening our fellowship. Years ago there was an association of pastors, but it faded out because of individuality. This year we have restored the pastoral association again." Two Christian radio stations service Almolonga. Pastor Joel reports that these stations enhance unity by allowing air time for all the evangelical pastors to use for a token price.

Reaching 90% of the city with the Gospel doesn't satisfy the pastors' evangelistic zeal. Pastor Francisco emphatically asserts, "We are applying God's guidance for the churches to keep growing. We have the goal to reach the whole town!"

Pastor Mariano believes God is giving the Church insight into the strategies to deepen and extend this community impact into future

generations. His heart breaks when he hears about powerful revivals which were not passed along to the next generation. To maintain the results already reached in Almolonga, Pastor Mariano's strategy encompasses a fivefold focus:

living in the fear of the Lord,  
maintaining intense prayer and fasting,  
building Christian schools,  
caring for new converts,  
and establishing strong families.

Firstly, he urges his flock to, "always live under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Live your life in the fear of the Lord as a good testimony. When we truly live the Christian life, demonic principalities are more easily overthrown."

Secondly, to maintain the results won through intercession and spiritual warfare, the Church must continue steadfast in prayer and fasting. Long past the breakthroughs in the 70s, many believers in Almolonga continue weekly disciplines of prayer and fasting. At El Calvario Church, people are held accountable to participate in prayer and fasting.

Thirdly, Pastor Mariano is taking steps to build a Christian school, which he believes is critical to sustain the revival. He says that the children not only need an education, but a Christ-centred education taught by Christian teachers. "Education without Christian teachers can set up a counterattack from Satan by introducing traditions outside of Christianity. Then all that we have reached [in the revival] can crumble."

A fourth ingredient to maintain revival is an intentional plan to care for the new Christians. Someone from the church personally visits the new believers. They hold special discipleship meetings focusing on basic Bible doctrines. Deliverance and a clear break with their past life are important. "We inspire them toward diligent hard work, debt reduction and to live in the fear of God. New believers are instructed to prepare themselves for baptism. Fasting is one of the first spiritual disciplines taught to the new Christian," reports Pastor Mariano.

The fifth and final major focus to sustain the revival's impact is establishing strong families. Christians are instructed to only marry fellow believers. One counter-cultural measure El Calvario introduced in the late 1970s was the concept of letting people decide for themselves whom they would marry. Today, parents are consulted and there is a process of obtaining parental blessing and approval in mate selection, but the decision rests with the couple. Before, the parents would determine whom their children would marry. A courtship period was also unheard of in their culture; now they recommend a 6-month to a year courtship during which the couple gets to know each other. This has increased marital harmony within the Christianity community. Consequently, other churches in the community also follow similar plans.

Testimonies of individuals being changed relationally, spiritually, and financially by God's power are common in Christianity. But the amazing distinctive of Almolonga is that Christians there tell their testimony not simply as individuals, but collectively, as families and as a people.

Visiting a service at El Calvario Church is a little taste of Heaven. The church building is one of Guatemala's largest and most beautiful. This debt-free sanctuary (seating 1200+) is the gathering place of exuberant worshippers. Their release of emotions toward the Son of God is noteworthy because culturally these people are generally stoic and very reserved in expressing their emotions. To watch this passion for Jesus, especially among the youth and children, it is hard to imagine that only a generation back, their families were in bondage to alcohol, idols, and demons. Perhaps that legacy of suffering explains the great abandon with which they worship Jesus: these people know they have something to celebrate!

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A video called *Transformation*, including a report on Almolonga in Guatemala and Cali in Columbia, is available from Toowoomba City Church, PO Box 2216, Toowoomba, Qld. 4350. Ph: 07 4638 2399. E-mail: [tccemail@tcchurch.com.au](mailto:tccemail@tcchurch.com.au)



## ***2 Cali Transformation***

### **George Otis Jr.**



George Otis Jr. has produced the Transformation DVDs, and written about cities and communities being transformed by the power of God. Transformation in Cali and the other cities featured in the well known ‘Transformations’ DVDs, continue to escalate, says George Otis Jr, director of The Sentinel Group.

CALI, Colombia: According to International Revival News (IRN), churches here are putting aside their differences, and this is resulting in great revival. “Even death threats from Satanists can’t stop the church in Cali,” said missionary and pastor Randy MacMillan.

Following the mysterious deaths of a number of pastors last year, MacMillan, pastor of the city’s 1,500-member Christian Faith Community Church survived several attempts on his life. One man wanted to kill him during a Sunday service, but came up a few days later to confess that he had been paid by an international group of

Satanists to shoot MacMillan. “Something kept me from doing it,” he said.

The Columbian police consider the reports accurate but don’t think it worth investigating. MacMillan says the city, previously known as a violent drug trafficking centre, is currently experiencing a Christian revival. The churches have a common vision, and the effects of the Gospel are visible in government institutions, the drug world and the crime scene. “All churches are affected, and we all know that we are in a spiritual battle,” says MacMillan. “There are so many new believers that the church cannot keep pace. Up to 50,000 people attend prayer rallies in the stadium.

It wasn’t always like that. For many years, we pastors didn’t see eye to eye—sometimes we couldn’t even agree on where to meet. In 1993, we decided to put these petty differences behind us and unite. For example, we have elected 12 ‘spiritual elders’ to deal with city concerns.”

The Lord has been working in these communities in a marvellous way. The transformation that has been reported is showing no signs of abating at all. I just received a phone report indicating that the move of God in Cali has now begun to spread to other surrounding cities in the nation of Colombia, which, as you probably know, is presently being wrapped with civil unrest and violence at just a terrible level.

The entire soccer team associated with the City of Cali has now been born again. This is the equivalent, for us, to the New York Yankees all giving their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ or the Seattle Mariners all given faith in one fell swoop. It has really rattled the community down there.

In addition to this, in a recent all night prayer vigil, they have grown so large now that the football stadium there is now way too small for them. In town there is this large a open area (near the centre of the city) that is a park, kind of a mall. This is the only place now where they are able to congregate.

There were over eighty thousand of these folks that gathered together for the last all-night prayer vigil. As you may recall, they

have been doing this every ninety days since early 1995. So this had real staying power. The mayor was at this particular gathering and once again, reaffirmed, I guess in a very, very emotional way, that the city of Cali, Colombia belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

They had just been given permission in the city of Cali to open the first Christian television station in the nation of Colombia. Cali used to be the most violent and corrupt city in that nation. I like that turn-around.

I also learned that the city of Medellin, just a little farther north, was the initial headquarters of the cocaine cartel before they moved to Cali, and also served as a major centre for the production, processing and export of heroin. Medellin is an extremely dangerous city - a very large city, too.

What has happened in Cali has now spread and has gotten all over Medellin, Colombia. They just recently held a march through the city of over eighty thousand people proclaiming Jesus as Lord and worshipping. The city council there now, believe it or not, has banned the observance of Halloween (it's gone that far) because of its pagan origin. This just gives you a little bit of an idea of what is continuing to happen.

We have also, now, personally developed a recent list of communities that have been transformed in the last few years. That number that started with eight when we began our research, now is at more than forty; this is a growing trend. We are seeing God not only continuing his work in the cities that we have featured, but there are now dozens of additional communities around the world that have recently been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's still only the beginning of what God is doing today.

Just as you and I are getting used to this idea that God can transform an entire city; not just grow a church in a community, but transform an entire city, God is now off to the races doing bigger and better things than that. This is, of course, in God's way. You cannot keep up with him. As soon as you think you've got Him figured, as soon as you think you have measured him, he's moved beyond measure.

So, what we are seeing him do today is now moving into entire regions, provinces, national homelands. In one case, I believe we are about ready to see an entire nation on the verge of being transformed. This is what we have begun to film and will be the theme of the *Transformations Two* video that we hope to release in 2001.

*Source: Joel News, No. 336, 18 September, 2000. See also Renewal Journal #17: Unity: "Snapshots of Glory" by George Otis Jr.*

## ***3 Revival in Bogotá***

### **Guido Kuwas**



Guido Kuwas wrote as editor of the website Global Revival News.

#### **Introduction**

A few years ago we heard about the church in Bogotá, Colombia and about Cesar Castellanos who was pastoring that church. There were rumours of incredible growth and revival. Tens of thousands were members in the church.

The senior pastors of Metro church Sunderland (UK), Ken and Lois Gott, met up with the Colombian pastor in Wales, in circumstances that can only be described as Divine. The Gotts flew to Bogotá, invited by Pastor Cesar Castellanos. They were convinced that they had witnessed a church to whom God had given the strategy for church multiplication through cells in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – the wineskin for revival.

The strategy (also referred to as The Vision) did not come cheap. The pastors Cesar and Claudia Castellanos paid a very high price. Several years ago they were attacked and robbed in their house and later nearly shot dead while in their car at a traffic light (with their four young daughters). They had to be taken to the States to recover. So it's worth listening to what they have to say.

Because of the relationship between Pastors Ken and Lois Gott and Pastors Cesar and Claudia Castellanos, our Sunderland church has committed itself to visit Bogotá regularly in order to marinate in the Vision and to catch the anointing of multiplication, brokenness, holiness and spiritual warfare that is so active in the Bogotá Church, called “Mision Carismatica Internacional” or MCI.

I had the privilege to witness the Vision at its source along with Pastor Ken Gott and other members from our church. What follows is what I saw, heard and experienced during that visit on July 20-30, 2000.

### **Revival Youth Meeting**

After nearly 17 hours travelling we landed in Bogotá and were taken to our hotel. What struck us immediately was the fact that the church had appointed young men (some of them fluent in English) to look after us. Every one of them was a leader of cells. They had obviously learnt to apply Matt 23:11, The greatest among you will be your servant.

We went to the Saturday night youth meeting! Now, what is our European image of a Saturday night youth meeting? A handful of youths playing table tennis in a youth club? In Bogotá they fill a 26,000-seat stadium twice on a Saturday night!

The music consisted of highly charged praise to God with spiritual warfare at its core: loud and aggressive, modern and relevant. The youth leader’s talent and enthusiasm were like “nothing ever seen or heard” before. This young man, Freddie, has over 500 cells (approximately involving 5000 youths). The youth meeting is made attractive for the unsaved. Any youth will be proud to invite their unsaved friend to come along because they can confidently promise a good Saturday night out!

Only later we understood the amount of prayer and fasting that goes into the preparation for such an event. Every item on the program has been thoroughly soaked in prayer and fasting. For instance, dancers were on the stage leading the youths in choreographic warfare dance. Every one of these dancers is required to lead a holy and righteous life before they can stand on the platform. They all have to attend the dance school that teaches

them (among many things) doctrine, spiritual warfare, dance, prayer, prophecy and holy living.

The youth congregation flock out of their seats into the aisle and right in front of the stage joining in with the stage dancers. We, as visitors, stood there amazed at the fervour and the sound of these young people and some of us even tried joining in, but I reckon we need more practice.

One of the songs, “Levántate Señor! (Arise Oh Lord! or Rise Up Oh Lord!)” was followed by a session in which the song leader, along with the rest of the congregation, commanded evil spirits to flee: spirits of division, hate, wickedness and other such spirits. The power and authority among that crowd of youths was unique.

At another Youth Meeting we also witnessed spontaneous Revival Praise when Pastor Cesar stepped to the microphone. Before he could open his mouth, all the 20,000-odd youth erupted into explosive jubilation with “Ole, Ole Jesus!” and “Satan! Christ has defeated you!” and an impressive demonstration of Mexican Waves. It was awesome! This lasted nearly 10 minutes non-stop.

The Word that is preached after the songs is also worth noting. You would expect a heart-rending Gospel message pleading with the youth to come forward for salvation. Nothing is further from the truth! At our first Youth meeting a youth pastor Rojas (every time ‘pastor’ is used, remember: this signifies a leader of 500 or more cells!) preached on principles of prayer; a message we all benefited from. He followed it up with a prayer that we all had to pray: the sinner’s prayer. Without any hype or emotionalism or even rousing background organ music, he asked the youths which one of them had prayed that prayer for the first time. Then he invited them to come forward because he wanted to pray specifically for them.

Without further ado nearly 500 youths came forward. Apparently this happens every Saturday night in both meetings!

I was also amazed at the wisdom that the Lord had given the leaders regarding “keeping the fruit (converts).” They surrounded the group of people who had come forward with a human fence, formed by those who are called Consolidators. These trained youth cell leaders look after the new converts. They start by encouraging those who are at the altar not to go back to their seats. Basically,

they block the way! Subsequently the people are led away from the altar to a room where they will hear a short talk on salvation and they will pray the sinner's prayer again, just to make sure they know what they are doing!

Mixed in the crowds are more consolidators who will take the contact details of every new convert and give them a free booklet about their newly found life in Christ. Within 24-48 hours the consolidator will contact the new believer and arrange a home visit in the same week. Soon after that the new Christian will be planted into a cell where he/she will be pastored. This is how they keep nearly 90% of all the new converts. Considering that approximately only 3% of those who respond at a typical evangelistic crusade in Europe end up being member of a local church, this is certainly worth noting.

### **Revival Sunday Services**

The next day, Sunday morning, there were 3 services at the Coliseum (they meet also in other places to fit in everybody): 7am, 9am and 11am. We attended the 9am service where Pastor Cesar Castellanos preached. Again, they were expecting hundreds to get saved but the preaching was not evangelistic. It was about The Anointing. And boy, could you feel the Anointing in that place! During the praise where the youth dancers lead the congregation in dance, all the kids came out to the front to join in with the dancers. I am referring to little tots from 3 years and older. It was a beautiful sight to see them join in the praise and spiritual warfare.

When the altar call came, nearly 400 people came forward. The consolidators kick in to action again.

### **The Vision**

Every cell member is expected to be trained as a leader of cells. The training and discipling is includes deliverance from demons, breaking of curses and generational bondage, inner healing and baptism in the Holy Spirit. They are taught how to successfully evangelise, pray and fast, enter into spiritual warfare, how to live a life of brokenness and holiness before God and people. They are disciplined by their cell leader and later when they are producing



disciples they are mentored by a Leader of twelve.

This is one of the core values of the Vision: Each leader should pray and ask God for twelve leaders into whom he will pour out his life. Out of this will come twelve excellent leaders who are able to produce a further 12 excellent leaders.

Instead of trying to pastor thousands of people, the Senior Pastor only has to concentrate on twelve leaders whom the Lord has given him. Using this strategy he can permeate the whole of the church in Revival with leadership qualities. It's all in the Bible (Luke 6:12,13; 2 Tim 2:2) and yet this is the first church in the world that is methodically and successfully applying these biblical leadership principles on such a large scale.

The wisdom of this is that there is no ceiling to the number of people a church can train using this strategy: ideal for an end-time harvest! By the third generation of the twelves you are reaching 20,736 and by the 5<sup>th</sup> generation you are talking about 2,985,984 leaders!

Every member of the church is properly pastored; every one of them is set free from any demonic oppression and healed from any emotional hurts. This produces an army that can multiply itself healthily!

Another core value of the vision (in a nutshell) is that the Bogotá Church actually believes that they will take their nation for Christ. They believe in the multiplication anointing that God gave to Abraham. In Christ we are children of Abraham and have inherited all his blessings (Gal 3:6ff).

Pastors Cesar and Claudia Castellanos have believed God and they are seeing that Word fulfilled before their eyes. They are now inspiring other nations to go after the same anointing of multiplication: Brazil is taking the country by force using this Vision. Central and South America are reshaping the destiny of their countries by following in the footsteps of Bogotá.

## **The Conference**

Meanwhile, back to our visit, we had (prior to the actual conference) the privilege of being taught the vision in some detail in

special meetings at the Church's offices. The speakers were from the Youth Network: young men and women in their late twenties, I guess. Each one of them had several hundreds of cells. These sessions were quickly set up for us who had arrived early for the conference. With us were groups from Venezuela, Brazil, Chile and the US. The love, self-denial and Christ-likeness of the speakers were not unique – they were typical of the whole church!

At the official conference, delegates from all over the world gathered to hear and celebrate the Vision. Every speaker, whether male or female (mostly from Pastors Cesar and Claudia's Twelves) had the same anointing and power as their mentors. We were encouraged to go for our nations and senior pastors were encouraged to find their twelves. We were all told to go and multiply like the stars.

When Pastor Claudia held her ladies meeting a couple of weeks ago 3,000 ladies found Christ as their Saviour. However, she encouraged her ladies to do better next time: they are going for 7,000!

At one of the last meetings, Pastor Claudia released her pastors to go through the congregation of delegates and impart the Lord's anointing. We previously had also received an impartation by Pastor Cesar himself. By faith we have received the multiplication anointing and now we need to apply it in our countries.

### **Applying the Vision**

It was hard to say goodbye to the church in Bogotá. As our plane took off from Bogotá I was wondering: How will I ever forget the Christ-like people there? Pastors Cesar and Claudia were such lovely, approachable Christ-like people. Their leaders were just replicas of them as far as love, commitment and self-denial were concerned. The stewards who looked after us considered it pure joy and honour to serve us. How will we forget the sight of hundreds coming to the Lord in every meeting? How will we ever be content with Christian-orientated self-indulgent meetings? Somehow amidst all our meetings (mostly geared towards a blessing for the Christian), we seem to have forgotten that the Lord Jesus did say "make disciples of all the nations ... and I am with you" (Matthew 28:18-20).

We know now without a shadow of a doubt, that we have witnessed a Church in sustained revival, challenging us to apply the Vision to our “small” churches in Europe. Cells and Twelves are the wineskins for Revival. If the Church could diligently apply this Vision, we would see sustained revival in Europe and abroad – not a 3 year revival which peters out at the end. However, the price is high and it’s not for the faint-hearted.

Colombia is currently best known for its drug-related crimes. However, it won’t be long before it will be best known for having one of the largest and fastest growing churches not only in the world, but in history. It is a hot spot where one can catch the Vision!

## **2001 Update**

What’s going on?

More than 20,000 people (primarily youth) are crammed together in an indoor stadium in Bogotá. Large numbers of coaches drop people off. Long queues try to get in. Street vendors sell fruit and snacks all around the outside of the complex.

No, it’s not an international sporting event. It’s the church in Bogotá, Colombia, getting ready for a revival service. Actually, it’s only a tenth of the church gathering together. If all the 200,000 or more people turned up, they would have a problem: not enough seats! To make things worse, delegates from literally all around the world have turned up to witness the Bogotá phenomenon for themselves. I was one of them.

## **The Phenomenon**

Our group (nearly 80 people) belonged to Pastors Ken & Lois Gott’s church in Sunderland, UK. But there were other groups from Kensington Temple in London (Pastors Colin & Amanda Dye) and from Scotland (Pastor Jimmy Dowds). Then there were various large groups from South American countries, US, Canada, Europe, Asia etc. 3,000 or more delegates from these parts of the world landed in Bogotá for a week’s conference in January 2001, eager to

catch the Bogotá anointing and to take it back to their countries.

What you have to realise is this: The Bogotá anointing is not the kind you can just come and enjoy for yourself, like we all did at Toronto and Pensacola. We all went to those places to get refreshed and to get right with God and perhaps to take it back to our church. What God is pouring out in Bogotá is an anointing for multiplication of souls for the Corporate Church - not for individuals - not for conference junkies!

The revival in Bogotá will demand changes in our churches. The senior pastors and other leaders have the authority and influence to implement changes as God reveals these to them. Metro Church in Sunderland is very privileged to have their pastors (Ken & Lois Gott) fully behind the Bogotá Vision of multiplication. They have been able to start implementing the required changes in their churches creating a wineskin for the greatest harvest in history.

We saw a stadium holding 20,000 people that was throbbing with spiritual warfare. We saw youngsters praising God and engaging in spiritual battle. We saw spontaneous “Mexican wave” praise offerings going on around the stadium. We heard victory chants around us (“Satan! Jesus has defeated you!” and “Ole (4X) Jesus, Jesus”) led by no man, only the Holy Spirit. We experienced praise and worship in a style that would put any secular concert to shame (dance, smoke machine, lights, professional voices - the full works). And we saw 3 or 400 people getting saved in one single meeting. How do they do it? What is their secret?

For a detailed answer to those questions you will have to read the various books written about the Revival in Colombia (see heading ‘More Information’ further below). However, let us look at the main points of the Revival.

### **The Strategy**

Their senior pastors Cesar and Claudia Castellanos believe that every church member should be trained into a soul winning leader producing leaders after their own kind training them to be leaders

who are able to produce more leaders and so on.

They believe that their strongest weapon is what they have labelled as consolidation. They are aware that after most big crusades only a very low percentage of new converts actually stay rooted in Christ. So they developed, through prayer, a method to “consolidate” every new believer as soon as they get saved. They are strategically disciplined and rooted in the love and purity of God, filled with the Holy Spirit and delivered from every kind of demons and generational curses. All this can happen in matter of weeks after their salvation. This way they are retaining nearly 80% of the fruit.

The new believer is assigned to a cell and will be looked after and trained by the cell leader. Through another training module called the School of Leaders the new convert can become a cell leader himself within a year after his conversion. The new leader will keep meeting with his mentor while he leads his new cell, ready to repeat the process with his new disciples. The whole church meets in cells throughout the week and comes together at weekends for a celebration meeting. The emphasis is not on what happens Sunday morning but what happens in the cells. Everybody is winning souls and building their downline “cells.” A pastor is someone who has 500 cells in his downline. We had the privilege to meet several of those. One of the worship leaders has 900 women cells and another one has 2,500 youth cells.

Everyone is taught that one of their main purposes on earth is to win souls and multiply.

## **The Vision**

Pastor Cesar Castellanos received a vision from God in which he understood that (in Christ) the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2,3: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (NIV) was still valid today for every Christian.

He believed God and started imparting faith to those around him so

that together they would believe for their individual 'nation'. The vision turned out to be genuine since no other church has ever seen such rapid growth through multiplication of cells. Actually, it makes sense: if we believe that the Lord Jesus is coming soon and that there is coming a great harvest, than this must be the wineskin for world evangelisation. Let's face it: The way we've been doing church is now out-dated!

Another revelation that Pastor Castellanos received was that of the Twelve. Just as the Father had 12 men for Jesus through whom He multiplied himself, so also God has for every one of us twelve persons who are called to be mentored by us. Each one of the twelve has twelve who in turn will each have twelve and so on. You are called to only pour your life into twelve people and teach them to do the same. Think in 12s: 12, 144, 1728, 20 736, 248 832, 2 985 984, 35 831 808. In 7 layers of 12s you can pastor 35 million people. Following this principle you can pastor a multitude as numerous the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore without getting a nervous breakdown.

The Church has lost her first calling of world evangelisation. And the few congregations who do exceed a couple of thousands are lulled into stopping there with a feeling of "we've arrived!" This vision of Bogotá knows no limits! They are dreaming of winning the whole city of Bogotá; the whole country of Colombia ... and then the world.

That's why 3,000 delegates attended this conference: to take this revelation back to their countries; to challenge their congregations to dream again - of nations won for Christ.

### **The Life Style**

However, apart from spectacular growth, there is another feature that sets this church apart from many others: Christ-likeness. All the cell leaders you meet have the same sweetness of Christ on them. The ushers are powerful cell leaders filled with Christ. The singers are soul winners and violent warriors in the Spirit. The senior pastors are full of holiness, humility and brokenness. The price tag on their achievements in the church: their very lives.

The people are taught holiness as a life style and as a weapon against satan. Because of the consolidation modules of deliverance and inner healing, the new converts are free to pursue holy living with a passion I've never seen before. I interviewed a young man in his early twenties who has been saved for 3 years. After one year of discipleship and training in the School of Leaders he has produced in the last 2 years 9 cells and he is mentoring 6 leaders as part of his Twelve. "I fast one day every week," he told me, "and every day I get up at 5am to pray for my disciples and for new souls. At the end of this year I will have 50 cells and I am believing God for 500 cells in three or four years time."

During the week and a half we were there he led at least two persons to the Lord. By the way, he was an usher, a sort of guide looking after the UK visitors.

The reason they see so much success is that they actually live the life. Satan comes but has nothing on them (John 14:30). When they engage in spiritual warfare they achieve success because their lives are clean and they have been praying and fasting with diligence. So, don't just look at the structure but look at the price tag.

We can't achieve their success if we are jealous of the other pastor in our city who is so popular, or if we think we always know it better. We won't get anywhere in this vision if we can't submit to leaders and honour them by serving them. The devil will laugh at us if we pursue this vision but we treat our wives or husbands badly. We can't enter into spiritual warfare for our cities if we have open windows for the enemy. We need to sanctify our lives in order to have the authority to enter into battle for our cities.

### **Will it Work for Me?**

God is getting ready to spread this revelation world-wide because he will harvest the multitudes. First he gave us the hunger and desire for revival during the Renewal years but now he is showing us how to achieve it. We have to ask God for faith to believe that he can use "little ol' me" to win multitudes - not just one or two. Once you connect with God's faith you can start dreaming about your 'nation'. Then you'll be burdened to fast and pray for the souls that

God has placed on your heart. And then, well, you'll be a 'fisher of men'.

Some will argue trying to find faults with the vision or with the culture or the people or even the theology. But with all due respect: it is working. They are winning souls at a rate of nearly 2000 a week. This rate is due to be multiplied as more and more are getting saved. They are winning more souls in one church than many Western churches put together!

We should be asking God: "How can I tap into what you are pouring out in our days? Help me to surrender my good ideas for your God ideas. Help me to recognise your Spirit when He is on the move!"

This anointing is working in South America, England, Scotland, Korea - all around the world it's beginning to happen. It is not a Latin American thing. It is for the church world-wide!

This has just been an impression from Bogotá but you can visit the Church (Mision Carismatica Internacional -MCI) website at [www.mci12.com](http://www.mci12.com). Their books and other material are just being released into the English language, but if you can read Spanish you can order the lot! Stay tuned!



## ***4 Prison Revival in Argentina***

### **Ed Silvoso**



Article by Edgardo Silvoso printed in *The Evangelical Beacon*.

Argentina's largest prison is located in the town of Olmos, less than 100 kilometers south of Buenos Aires, the capital of the country. It is a maximum security facility that houses nearly 3,000 inmates. One of the greatest and most dramatic miracles in modern history has taken place inside the walls of that prison.

Until a few years ago, the prison was in total chaos. Crime was rampant. Riots, murders, sexual abuse, extortion and male prostitution were commonplace. The prison was so out of control that by default the authorities turned over the daily running of the place to the mafia and drug dealers serving time there. These de facto leaders chose to reside on the fourth of five floors, which came to be known as the "elephant's floor" since all the heavyweights lived there. Can you imagine what this place became when the worst inmates were given the run of it? Even a Church of Satan was established on the premises and animal sacrifices were offered regularly. Olmos - as the prison is commonly known - was so impregnable that pastors from the nearby towns had great

difficulty getting inside its perimeter.

There is a tunnel that connects the outside world with the prison. A local pastor reported that as he tried to get inside the prison, halfway through that tunnel he would become ill and had to be carried out. Some inmates reported being tormented by demons which, according to those reports, literally materialized in their cells. Satan was in control indeed. However, it appears that the evil one made a gross miscalculation that eventually did him in. This had to do with grace. As you know, grace requires the pre-existence of sin and the greater the sin, the greater the grace available to the repentant sinner. By those standards, Olmos was more than qualified. This is how it came about:

Miracle begins: In the nearby town of Laplata, a well-known pastor was caught committing a crime and was sentenced to serve time—at Olmos! At first it appeared that Satan had won: his citadel remained impregnable and a church leader had been publicly disgraced. But the pastor repented and cried out to God for a second chance. And God is indeed the God of second chances. God forgave him and filled him with the Holy Spirit. Now this pastor was determined to see God bring good out of terrible evil. Incensed with a passion for the lost and overwhelmed with gratitude to God for his grace, he became what I call “a spiritual kamikaze”. In his attempt to preach the gospel to everyone around, he thrust himself with gusto into the very pit of hell. He witnessed to the mafia dons, gang leaders, drug dealers and even to the Church of Satan priests! Like a kamikaze pilot, he gave up his life in order to cause the most damage possible to the enemy.

Very soon a small group of believers emerged. What Satan must have thought as an impregnable place, now hosted an emerging Christian church. I believe that the anxiety he must have felt about this led to his second miscalculation. A persecution against the Christians was unleashed. If persecution can be brutal in the outside world where existing laws, the possibility of help and refuge, and the availability of the media can somehow mitigate it, imagine the persecution inside a maximum security prison run by the ruthless and fearless. However, God, was in control and the Biblical principle that whatever Satan plans for evil God turns around for good still held.

The persecution gave the Christian inmates legal grounds to request protection in the form of their own cell block --- each cell block houses 42 inmates. The authorities reluctantly agreed and granted the new Christians a cell block of their own on the worst floor. The church was placed in the midst of his control and command center . . . aware that their lives were at risk, the inmates organized themselves as a church.

The first order of business was a 40 day fast. They also divided themselves into seven teams of six people each. Each team was to stand guard every night from 11PM to 5AM, working in pairs they prayed, read the Bible and moved from bed to bed interceding for each one of their sleeping Christian inmates. After two hours they rotate tasks. This approach became highly effective, not only in protecting their own perimeter but also in infiltrating Satan's perimeter inside the prison.

In answer to those prayers, Miguel Zucarelli, a pastor in town, felt led to apply for a job at the prison. Zucarelli was interviewed by several officials, and all of them said, "We do not want you here, we hate you. If you get the job, we may even hurt you. Get lost!" But Zucarelli persevered and against all odds—except God's—he got the job. As he connected with the emerging prison church, things began to happen. They prayed for and were given one and a half hours a week on the prison radio station, which all inmates hear since the speaker can not be turned down nor can the station be changed. Very soon the weekly Gospel message began to make an impact on the prison population. This, coupled with intense prayer activity in the Christian cell block, produced mass conversions. Today 44 percent of the inmates are born again.

As soon as 42 new converts are admitted to the church, a cell block is made available for them to move in. A resident pastor is appointed from among the inmates and the same routine of prayer, fasting and night vigils is instituted.

Since no money is allowed to circulate inside the prison, the inmates tithe from the care packages they receive from relatives. Last year a town in Central Argentina was devastated by floods and the church in the prison was able to send relief by using the product of their tithes. They fast twice a week and hold church services every day.

There are 19 cell blocks that occupy the entire fourth floor and 80% of the third floor. Nearly 1,300 inmates have received Christ. Recent unconfirmed reports state that the number of guards has been reduced from 300 to 30 as a result of behavior standards of the Christians. Normally 50% of the inmates find themselves back in prison following their release. Of the 604 released Christians, only three have returned - less than half of one percent!

During an International Institute which Harvest Evangelism holds in Argentina every fall, we (Army of Intercessors) organized a trip to the prison to meet with the inmates. The prison chapel is too small to accommodate the growing number of believers, so they have removed all the furniture. More than 800 inmates stand shoulder to shoulder except when they kneel to pray. Their vibrant singing is incredibly moving. One of the inmate pastors said to our group, 'If you came to see prisoners, you have come to the wrong place. We are free men, free indeed!' Even though their bodies are in prison, they roam the heavenly places in prayer and intercession!

## ***5 Missions at the Margins***

### **Bob Ekblad**



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*Mission activity has sometimes swung between the two extremes of purely social work and solely evangelistic preaching. God created us as whole persons, however, and wants spirits, souls, and bodies to be brought into wholeness. Practical projects addressing physical needs are not incompatible with supernatural ministry; rather, they are an outlet for God's love and power to bring transformation to people's hearts and lives.*

### **Facilitating Transformation**

Many people on the margins of society have images of God that are mostly negative in ways that hold them back from any

positive benefit or any spiritual attraction whatsoever. For many “god” has already been defined by core experiences of human father or authority figures who abandoned or rejected them, punished or abused them, was impossible to please and controlling or permissive and negligent. Negative images of God also come through people’s assumptions that calamities, injustice, sickness and other forms of oppression are willed by God or sent as punishments.

When my Honduran peasant colleague Fernando and I first began asking impoverished peasants why their corn and bean harvest were so dismal, I was startled by their near unanimous responses: “It’s God’s will.” We launched our ministry Tierra Nueva by starting a demonstration farm-- cultivating steep, eroded mountainsides using contoured terraces, rock or pasture grass barriers to prevent further erosion and soil building strategies like compost and cover crops. We planted corn, beans, vegetables and fruit trees to the curve of the land. We experimented with fish ponds, fuel efficient mud stoves and other appropriate technologies.

Our first year’s harvest was ten times better than people were accustomed to seeing, drawing the attention of peasants from the surrounding area. We helped those interested in attempting our approach establish an experimental plot on their own land, disciplining them in these organic-intensive farming methods. When they saw for themselves that protecting and rebuilding soil led to dramatically improved harvests, God was “off the hook,” and no longer to blame— and a space was opened for them to hear about a good God who does not will crop failures and poverty.

My wife Gracie and our Guatemalan colleague Catalina taught vegetable gardening, nutritious recipes, hygiene and other preventative health measures and the people found their health improving. As people learned that amoebas and bacteria could be eradicated through boiling their water, once again God was no longer to blame for the premature death of their children through malnutrition and dysentery. Health education brought a needed corrective to traditional explanations that attributed most common health problems to witchcraft or curses from

enemy neighbors. While deliverance continued to be important in combating other kinds of oppression, subsistence farming and health education are also critical for community wellbeing—easing tensions due to false accusations and taking away power from local curanderos (witch doctors). ...

Often my colleagues and I find ourselves sharing spontaneous impressions that people recognize as bringing to light details that only God could know. Recently while praying for a Mexican farm worker in his late thirties a faint picture flashed across my mind of an adult throwing rocks at a young boy who was shepherded animals. I asked him if his father ever lost his temper and threw rocks at him when he was a boy, causing him to run away terrified. He began to cry and grabbed his leg where he had been hit. That day he forgave his father for this offense, which was one of many others that contributed to this man's fear of displeasing employers and others in authority.

The Apostle Paul writes that the one who prophesies “speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort” (1 Cor 14:3 NIV) and makes God real to a person who do not yet believe when “the secrets of his heart are disclosed” (1 Cor 14:25 ESV).

A close look at Jesus' prophetic ministry as depicted in the Gospels overturns alienating traditional images of God. Jesus' revelation to the astounded Samaritan woman that she had had five husbands as he offered her living water in John 4 is one of many examples that subverts contemporary readers assumptions. Jesus' witness regularly challenges common beliefs that God favors the righteous over sinners, law-abiding people over criminals, the rich over the poor, the beautiful over the ugly, the intelligent over the ignorant, offering flashes of a very different sort of God.

People assume that God is like a rigorous admissions officer at an exclusive University or a demanding, scrupulous employer examining resumes— choosing only the most deserving into his ranks. Especially if they are to be ministry workers or any kind of leader. Yet right from the beginning of the Bible, we see that God pursues the most unlikely candidates. ...

In our weekly jail Bible studies, visits to migrant camps and rural villages in Central America and everywhere we regularly lead Bible studies, we pray for suffering people and witness God's power to heal. Healing often happens before people come to faith. This undermines the dominant image of God that sees sickness and a sanction for bad behavior and healing or any sort of benefit as a reward for good behaviour.

Once I offered to pray for a man suffering from shoulder and lower back pain after the police had violently pulled his arms behind his back nearly dislocating his shoulders to handcuff him. They had thrown him in the back of the police car and the handcuffs had dug into his back. Before praying for him I asked if he felt he needed to forgive the police for their excessive use of force. "No," he said. "I was drunk and resisting arrest. I'm a big dude and was pretty out of control. They were just doing their job."

I prayed that Jesus would undo the damage done by the police and show the man how much He loved him regardless of his violence. I stepped away and asked him if he felt any improvement. He said he felt the pain leave his lower back but said he was sure that if he drew his arms back behind his back the pain would be intolerable. He began to gingerly move his arms behind his back and amazement came over his face. "I'll grant it to you. I'll grant it to you. The pain is completely gone," he said, dropping to his chair and crying with his head in his hands. Like in the Gospel accounts we regularly see God's healing presence overturn people's negative expectations as the one full of grace and truth makes himself known concretely.

Healing is one important dimension of an important Greek verb *sotzo*, which literally means "to save," but is often used in the Gospels as a synonym for "to heal." There are two other Greek verbs used in miracles of healing, *therapueo* "to cure" and *iaomai* "to heal," so Gospel writers seem to be making a special point in using the highly theological *sotzo*, which is used in Paul's writings to refer almost exclusively to Jesus' saving work on the cross for eternal life (see Rom 5:9-10; 8:24; 9:22; 10:9-10,13; 11:14, 26; 1 Cor 1:18, 21; 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; 7:16; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2; Eph 2:5, 8; 1 Tim 1:15). This meaning of salvation for eternal life



is also present in the Gospels (Mat 10:22; 16:25; 24:12-13; 19:16, 25; John 3:17; 5:34; 10:9; 12:47). However there are many occurrences of *sotzo* that are rendered in English translations as “heal” in miracle stories where people experience physical healing (Matt 9:21, 22; Mk 3:4; 5:23, 28, 34; 6:56; 10:52; Luke 6:9; 8:48, 50; 17:19; 18:42; Acts 4:9; 14:9). In addition, we see many other occurrences of *sotzo* in the Gospels and Acts that refer to being saved or rescued from danger in the lifetime of the beneficiary (Matt 8:25; 14:30; 27:40, 42; 27:49; Mk 8:35, 35; Lk 9:55-56; 23:35, 37, 39; Acts 27:20, 31). This rich verb and the related noun *soteria* “salvation” present a holistic notion of saving/salvation that includes salvation for eternal life, supernatural healing and deliverance, but also physical acts of helping, rescuing and liberation. Mission must take into account this rich diversity of actions that communicate God’s love to our hurting world.

### **Gangs in prison**

I travelled to Guatemala in September 2008, to train pastors working with gang members. We visited one of Central America’s most infamous prisons to visit the gang member inmates of perhaps the most notorious street gang in the Western Hemisphere. A week before leaving for Guatemala City I dreamed of a heavily-tattooed man with a hole in his right side. I met this man in the second prison - a big intimidating guy with tattoos and a myriad of scars from stab wounds and bullets all over his body—including a big indentation on his right side from a near-death shootout with the police.

This man, a gang leader serving a 135-year sentence, ended up taking me back into the heart of the prison to find a bathroom, and then inviting me into his cell. I shared with him my dream and he was visibly moved, welcoming my offer to pray for him. He told me about his worries about his son and shared his longing for God’s peace and love in his heart. I prayed for him and anointed him with oil.

He led me back into the yard where we succeeded in gathering many inmates for a Bible study on Jesus’ call of Matthew the tax collector. I described how Matthew was a tax-collector—a member of a notorious class of people that nearly everyone hated.

“Who might fit the description of tax-collectors today?” I asked.

Gangs in Guatemala force businesses in their territories to pay “protection taxes” [from themselves] and taxi drivers to pay “circulation taxes”—and the men smiled and looked at each other, acknowledging that they fit the description.

“So what was Matthew doing when Jesus called him?” I ask.

The men look surprised when they note that he wasn’t following any rules, seeking God or doing anything religious. But he was practicing his despised trade when Jesus showed up on the street and chose him.

“So let’s see if Jesus made Matthew leave his gang to be a Christian,” I suggest, and people look closely at the next verse.

There Jesus is eating at Matthew’s house with other tax-collectors and sinners and the disciples.

“So who followed whom?” I ask, excited to see people’s reaction.

The men could see the Jesus had apparently followed gangster Matthew into his barrio and joined his homies for a meal.

“So what do you think, would you let Jesus join your gang?” I ask, looking directly to the man I’d just prayed for in his cell and the other gang chief.

They were caught off guard by such a question—but there we all were, deep in their turf being welcomed, Bibles, guitar and all-- and nobody was resisting. Big smiles lit up both their faces as we looked at Jesus’ reaction to the Pharisees’ disdain. “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

I ask them if they are at all offended to think of themselves as sick—and they don’t seem to be at all. I’ve got their attention. Jesus’ final word to the religious insiders hit these guys like a spray of spiritual bullets from a drive by:

“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.” Jesus’ firm dismissal of the accusing Pharisees “go and learn” and clear preference for sinners as the “called” drew the circle of gang members irresistibly into Jesus’ company.

I was delighted that the men agreed to let us lay hands on every one of their bare, heavily-tatted backs as my colleague sang worship

songs over them, including: “Jesus, friend of sinners, we love you.” I heard from a pastor that the gang leader I had prayed with was amazed at how his “homies” (fellow gang members) were letting us pray for him and whispered: “It’s been a long time since I’ve felt the Presence of the Holy Spirit in my life and seen the homies at peace. I feel really good.”

Two months later on November 22nd, I spent a day in a bleak French prison in Lyon where suicide was rampant. I was there training French prison chaplains and ministering to inmates. That night I took a train back to Paris to learn the horrific news that the Guatemalan gang leader I’d prayed with who had the hole in his side and three others had been taken in the middle of the night by the police and placed into a prison of 900 inmates that were all violently anti-gang. On the morning of November 22, 2008 rioting inmates killed, decapitated and mutilated the bodies of these four men who we’d laid hands on to bless.

While carrying off these men authorities also burned all the 150+ inmates possessions, sheets and makeshift shacks they’d built for conjugal visits in a big bonfire—leaving them beaten up, naked and traumatized. Local gang pastors boldly accompanied the shattered families and inmates in the aftermath of this event. They brought over 25 huge bags of clothes collected from churches, deeply touching the gang inmates who are used to being despised and excluded.

Yet anti-gang sentiment is rising in the country and scapegoating continues in full swing. Recently, authorities invaded the prison again and apprehended the other leader and two others, transporting to another prison. A plot was exposed showing their killings were being arranged for the anniversary of last year’s killing of four. This time high-level advocacy on their behalf before government officials in the USA and Guatemala exposed the plot and led to greater security and visits for these inmates. The gang members inside and outside the prison and their families have been deeply moved by Christian solidarity.

### **Micro-enterprise & Mission**

Gang members, drug-dealers and ex-offenders need opportunities to develop other skills so they can step away from lives of crime and become legally-functioning members of

society. Tierra Nueva is working to establish micro-businesses both in Honduras and in the USA to provide skills training, jobs and income to sustain our ministries. We continue to work to help farmers improve production and storage of basic grains, bring water to marginal neighbourhoods for basic needs and vegetable gardens, increase the quality of coffee and distribution of specialty coffee and establishing a water-purification plant to sell bottled water. We import Honduran coffee to the United States, where we have train and employ gang members and ex-offenders to roast and market specialty coffee through Underground Coffee Project. Tierra Nueva runs an organic farm called Jubilee Farm, producing and selling vegetables and flowers as a site for discipleship and training for farm workers and others on the margins. Micro-businesses are increasingly important to provide alternatives for felons, sites for ministry and income for ministries.

Direct confrontation of false images of God through proclamation and holistic responses to people's felt needs, fresh readings of Biblical texts, pastoral accompaniment, advocacy, prophetic ministry and healing prayer are some of the ways that prepare people to meet Jesus as the one who saves them from their sins and transforms their lives. The kindness of God leads to repentance—understood as a change of heart (Rom 2:4). So we do everything we can to effectively pluck up, break down, destroy and overthrow the false while also facilitating, ushering in and preparing the way for the revelation of the kind God who has the power to save.

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## *6 Vision for Church Growth*

### **Daryl and Cecily Brenton**



Daryl and Cecily Brenton completed their Bachelor of Ministry degrees at Christian Heritage College School of Ministries, and served as missionary translators in Papua New Guinea with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. This article discusses research findings from a huge data base compiled by Christian Schwartz.

Much has been written about Church Growth since McGavran's seminal book *Understanding Church Growth* was first written in 1980. However, the 'fog' surrounding Church Growth still exists. What are church growth factors that are truly necessary to the growth of local churches, and by extension, to denominations and the Kingdom of God as a whole?

#### **Church Growth Research**

McGavran made much of accountability in church growth. The main reason for energy and resources being wasted on unproductive ventures was what he called 'the fog', an imprecise evaluation of mission effectiveness. Many times decisions are not

converted into disciples and sometimes hard to reach groups were preferred to those that are more receptive (McGavran, 1990, p.36).

Christian Schwartz tackled this predicament. His desire for an objective evaluation of church growth principles prompted him to start a worldwide survey of churches from every continent. Designed by a social-scientist/psychologist, this project has generated a database of over 4.2 million responses, allowing for a statistical analysis of one hundred and seventy variables that were thought to affect church growth. It allowed for an objective search for principles that transcend culture and theological biases (Schwartz, 1996, pp. 18-19, 33).

Any effective approach to analysing church growth must distinguish between models derived from specific churches and principles that have been distilled from many examples (Swartz, 1996, pp. 16-17).

Christian spirituality, either individually or collectively, has two seemingly disparate poles. On one hand, church growth is seen as totally dependent upon God's sovereign action. On the other hand, human programs and organisation are seen as essential to facilitate church growth. Emphasis on one of these poles at the expense of the other leads to erroneous paradigms. Concentration on God's sovereign ability tends to a 'spiritualistic' view that undervalues, or indeed, opposes methods and organisation. The danger of the other extreme is that God's role is minimised and church growth is considered as just human endeavour that God automatically approves.

The writings of the Apostles on the life and structure of the church cover both of these aspects (see 1 Peter 2.5; Ephesians 2.21, 4.12; 1 Corinthians 3.9). The action of the Spirit constantly stimulates the organisation of programs, rules and institutions (Swartz, 1996, pp. 84-85). This is analogous to the growth of the skin and bones of a person that are formed during gestation and are completely replaced every month of life. Swartz maintained that the dynamic pole produces the organisational aspects of a church, which in turn encourages spiritual formation in the people. Like a spiral staircase, this dynamic has both a cyclical and a vertical movement (Swartz, 1996, pp. 96-97).

There are some aspects of church life that can be developed and there are some that are in the hands of God alone. This is much like

the case of a farmer who ploughs, plants, weeds and irrigates his crops but has to rely on the weather and the life force in the seed to form the desired crop (Swartz, 1996, p98-99). Understanding the dynamic of Christian spirituality allows one to become a junior partner with God in church growth.

### **Essential Ingredients**

One of the most difficult tasks of church growth is to isolate those factors essential to church growth. To be able to tell which of the multitude of social, environmental, historical, demographic, or various other influences are the real influences can be overwhelming. This is evident from the multitude of lists of such factors by church growth authors.

Swartz's survey results give an unprecedented opportunity to analyse what factors are trans-cultural and independent of personal theologies. Covering over one thousand churches in thirty-two countries, this survey was designed by a social scientist to avoid bias in the analysis of the resulting data. Many pastors have been disappointed, having adopted a model of church growth from a successful church without considering the various differences in culture and environment. Swartz approached the issue by analysing the results to distil those abstract principles that are relevant for all churches and then to individualise those principles in a plan for a particular local church (Swartz, 1996, pp. 16-19). Denominations could also benefit from this course of action to develop policies for the growth of their local congregations.

Many authors assume that an increase in attendance at worship services is church growth. However, those churches that were committed to raising the quality of their congregational life were found to experience numerical growth on a more consistent basis. When the quality of Christian spirituality in a congregation improves dramatically, church growth is almost a 'by-product' (Swartz, 1996, p. 42; cf. Peters, 1981, p. 23; Patterson, in Winter, 1981, p.613). It is important to identify those qualities that directly affect the growth of a congregation, both numerical and spiritual.

### **Empowering leadership**

Much church growth literature assumed that a task oriented leadership style was a characteristic of churches that are growing.

However, this was not shown to be the case. Growing churches were shown to have pastors who were usually more relationship oriented than task focussed. Rather than losing themselves in friendships however, these pastors were partnership oriented. They typically have a mindset that views non-clergy as people to be served, trained, equipped and supported in participating in the work of the ministry. These leaders have realised that they can empower themselves by: empowering others; discipling; delegating work; and multiplying leadership to do many times more than their own individual efforts.

The church must train believers in body ministry skills according to the Holy Spirit's giftings. Thus leadership will be in the position of being able to invest time and effort into the making of disciples, bringing overall growth to the church and denomination (Swartz, 1996, pp. 22-23).

### **Gift oriented ministry**

One of the major tenets of the Reformation is still unrealised in German-speaking Europe. The 'priesthood of believers' was one of Luther's most radical doctrines, with the potential to transform the life of the church of his times. However, a bureaucratic paradigm prevailed. Volunteers are mostly sought to fill the positions determined by the pastor.

Allowing Christians to work with their God-given gifts releases them from human striving to an unprecedented degree. This usually results in an increase of cooperation with the Holy Spirit. A correspondence between this gifted ministry and the personal contentedness of such Christians was also seen in the survey results.

As Christians serve in the area of their giftedness they are more likely to function under the power of the Holy Spirit instead of their own strength (Swartz, 1996, pp. 24-25).

### **Passionate spirituality**

A vibrant and contagious expression of faith was found to be more important than a charismatic persuasion or otherwise or whether one practiced spiritual warfare or used traditional liturgies or other such issues. A passionate spirituality is found wherever Christians express their faith with a contagious enthusiasm and practical



expression. This is the opposite of a moralistic legalism.

This is a quality that separates the growing from non-growing churches. A growing church will always be able to answer “Yes” when asked: “Are the believers in this church ‘on fire’, living prayerful, committed lives with joyful and enthusiastic faith?” (Swartz, 1996, pp. 26-27)

### **Functional structures**

This quality basically assumes that any structures that are put in place are designed to see that the other qualities are promoted (Swartz, 1996, pp. 28-29). This will sometimes mean the restructuring of previous structures to fulfil their purpose. Rather than forming a rigid exoskeleton like a crab’s shell, functional structures are more like a human skeleton, which is renewed regularly and increases to accommodate the growth of the body. Functional structures require a balance between the extremes of an overly spiritualised approach and that of a technocratic, ‘super pragmatism’.

Life and form both spring forth when God breathes His Holy Spirit into formless clay. A creative act occurs when structure and form knit together in God’s hands.

### **Inspiring worship service**

Such innovative strategies as using seeker sensitive services, did not show up as church growth principles. Issues of whether to use traditional terminology and liturgy or a casual and modern approach were not seen to be particularly important. The deciding factor was shown to be whether the service was inspiring to the participants. It is the concrete impact of the Holy Spirit’s presence that is ‘inspiring’ and draws people to the services without the need for pressure tactics (Swartz, 1996, pp. 30-31).

Though seeker services are a method of evangelism and worth consideration, they make no difference to overall church growth. If the presence of the Holy Spirit can be felt/seen permeating the church then the service and worship are most certainly going to be inspired.

### **Holistic small groups**

A holistic group is one that goes beyond just studying the Bible. It

must allow Christians to discuss issues of personal concern to provide the natural place for Christians to learn to serve others with their spiritual giftings. Through the multiplication of these small groups, leadership is trained in a 'hands on' situation. Discipleship is more fully developed in this sort of situation than in any large group discussions (Swartz, 1996, p. 32).

Different teaching methods have various effects on those who are listening. Kraft determined that monologues, that is, sermons/lectures, have little impact on the hearer and result in an increase of knowledge but little change in lifestyle. Small group discussion has great potential to produce changes in thinking patterns, due to greater interaction. However, it was life involvement or individual discipleship that had the potential to transform total life patterns (Kraft, 1991, pp. 140-141). It is of great benefit to Christians to note in what situations that Jesus used these teaching methods and why.

Small groups are the pillars of church growth. Their multiplication could be seen to be the 'most important' factor of all eight characteristics. Small groups can overcome cultural and personality differences often found in many large churches. The needs of the people can be met in the small group situation.

### **Need oriented evangelism**

Closely related to the previous quality is the need for church leaders to identify those Christians who are particularly gifted to be evangelists. Schwartz's research verified Wagner's thesis that only ten percent of all Christians are specifically called to be evangelists. Identifying these people and empowering them to function as God intended them to, frees the other ninety percent from the burden of trying to accomplish what they were not gifted to do and allows those so gifted to maximise their efforts (Swartz, 1996, pp. 34).

A major benefit of this strategy is that it allows those who are not called to be evangelists to use their gifts to support evangelistic efforts, for example, in follow up, discipling converts and maintaining records for future evaluation of these efforts.

To release the gift of evangelism it is essential for leadership in a church to identify and empower those believers possessing this Holy Spirit inspired gift.

## **Loving relationships**

Closely related to the importance of small, holistic groups is the state of unfeigned practical love among the Christians. Analysis of the research data showed that such variables as seeker services, evangelistic crusades or even spiritual warfare should not be deemed as principles of church growth. It is primarily, practical Christian love that generates a drawing power more effective than any program that relies only on verbal communication. Indeed, love is so important that it's lack was found to be the factor most likely to limit the growth of churches with over one thousand members. Wherever churches were lacking in this Christian love, their development was found to be held back (Swartz, 1996, p36-37).

The magnetic power of unfeigned, practical love generates more growth than any evangelistic program ever shall. A church full of laughter and loving, caring relationships will have both quality and growth

## **Integration of the qualities**

In natural church development our point of departure is not outward manifestations of growth, but the qualitative causes. ... Quality produces quantity (Swartz, 1996, p.42-43).



These qualities are not just individual factors that work independently. For an example of this interconnecting web of influences, just consider how functional structures relate in the area of empowering leadership. One of the goals of this kind of leadership is to develop individuals to fulfil their calling and to multiply a leadership that can delegate. A structure that, for

example, institutes departmental heads to develop co-leaders through discipleship allows the pastor to delegate areas of service to others. This offers the opportunity for intimate cooperation and the determination of the giftings of those individuals. In turn, this will promote a passionate expression of faith as these individuals function in their calling and allow them to support the church's need oriented evangelism. Moreover, with training and encouragement they will be able to replicate this system within the existing congregation as well as in establishing new churches.

The way that these qualities interact is like the balance of the four essential minerals in agriculture. It is common knowledge among farmers that the soil in their paddocks needs to have a balance of nitrogen, lime, potash and phosphorus to be viable (Swartz, 1996, pp. 54-55). Deficiencies in one or more of these minerals, or an imbalance between them, can spell the difference between success and failure of the crop and potentially of the farmer's finances as a whole.

The growth of a local congregation is a self-organising phenomenon. When the right principles are put into practice, numerical growth seems to be automatic.

Concentrating on raising the spiritual health of the congregation in the areas of community (that is, in fellowship and organisation) and its practical, enthusiastic expression has some unforeseen benefits. It allows for the breakdown of a seemingly overwhelming job into small, discrete goals. Strategies to improve each quality can prove to be very simple, even mundane. For example, an effective way to improve the occurrence of loving relationships could be as simple as encouraging members to invite each other home for a meal or for coffee. Very few members would feel competent to raise the love quotient of their home group, but most could easily provide some hospitality. Such achievable tasks generate enthusiasm.

The task of the church is to fulfil the Great Commission. On at least five occasions, Jesus commissioned his disciples to be his representatives (John 20.21; Mark 16.15; Matthew 28.18-19; Luke 24.46-48; Acts 1.8). The primary command in Matthew 28.18-19 is the imperative, 'make disciples'. This is confirmed by the use of participles for the other three instructions. Evangelism that leads to conversion but not service, is sub-Christian. Disciples are

followers, pupils or apprentices in the Christian faith. A ministry that truly disciples people will include aggressive evangelism (going), building converts into the community of faith (baptising them into the name) and showing them how to live as Christians (teaching to obey).

Perhaps the greatest weakness in discipleship in most Western churches is the lack of what Eims called the principle of association. Jesus chose his disciples to be with him. Thus, any Christian wishing to disciple someone must be willing to share his/her life with that person (Eims, 1978, p.33).

### **Strategies for Local Churches**

Petersen noted that the church has had, 'thirty years of discipleship programs, and we are not discipled' (Petersen, 1993, p.15). If the commission of the church is to make disciples, then this is a serious charge indeed. It is at the level of the local congregation that discipleship occurs, therefore, it is imperative that local congregations should give attention to providing an environment that will encourage this vital interaction. Schwartz identified holistic small groups as the most practical place for Christians to develop discipleship (Swartz, 1996, p. 32).

The church is a transforming community of believers, followers of Jesus in fellowship with him and each other. Scripture often refers to it as the family of God. In the doctrine of the Trinity, we see that God is a community of interrelating persons. It is only in relation to each other that we can differentiate each person of the Godhead. The Father and the Son are only so in relationship to each other, for Scripture declares that the Father and Son are co-equal and the Spirit is also known as the Spirit of God and as the Spirit of Christ.

This communal aspect is paramount in understanding what it means for us to be made in the 'image of God'. Community is an integral part of our make-up. It is as both male and female that God created us in his image (Genesis 1:27). This understanding makes sense of Jesus' statement that all his commands were encapsulated in the decree, 'these things I command you, that you love one another' (John 15:17, NKJ). It is in reflecting the relationships of Father, Son and Spirit that this community is maintained.

This love is intimately connected to keeping the commands of Jesus (John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:10, 14). This is the link between the command to love and the Great Commission. It is in small, holistic groups that 'teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:20a) is naturally carried out. Small groups that allow dialogue and one on one discipling are the only truly effective means of changing the total behaviour of people (Kraft, 1991, pp. 140-141). This is exactly what it means to teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded them to do.

With this aim firmly in mind, it is then possible to concentrate on strategy. Schwartz presented a ten-point plan to develop an individualised program for a church that wants to grow. This plan was designed with the results of the survey in view and was designed to be applicable to all types of congregations.

Firstly, it is important to inspire a new devotion to Jesus. Without this driving passion, no amount of teaching church growth principles will push-start a church. There must be spiritual momentum (Swartz, 1996, p106-107).

Secondly, there is a need to identify those problem areas that are limiting the spiritual quality of the church. Here it is important to have a reliable diagnostic tool, as it is often possible for a group with high expectations in a certain area to identify their strengths as the limiting factors due to past disappointments (ibid, pp. 108-109).

With that, the third step is to set qualitative goals. These are steps that result from asking, 'What can we do to increase all eight qualities'? A qualitative goal, within a time frame, becomes a great motivator for improvement. It provides an achievable goal with a specific, measurable outcome (ibid, pp. 110-111).

Fourthly, it is important to realise that there will be resistance to some of these measures. These should be identified and dealt with in a loving manner (ibid, pp. 112-113).

The fifth step is to determine to use what Swartz termed 'biotic principles' (ibid, pp, 62-82). These principles maximise the effectiveness of programs by using integrated thinking patterns (ibid, pp. 114-115).

Sixthly, it is important to exercise the church's strengths. This

concentrates on those strengths that are found in that church's 'spiritual culture'. These strengths are thus improved and can then be directed at strengthening those qualities that are limiting growth (ibid, pp. 116-117).

The use of materials that apply these biotic principles is the seventh step. These are directed at improving the spiritual health of the congregation with its accompanying benefits (ibid, pp. 118-119).

Step eight involves regular monitoring of the qualities and what measures will be needed to maintain spiritual health (ibid, pp. 120-121).

This allows for the ninth step: updating the program to meet changes in strengths and minimum factors.

The tenth step is the result of all healthy growth and maturity – reproduction. A healthy church should be able to start other congregations after a suitable time. Needless to say, that this offspring should have an awareness of those principles that brought it into being and be able to reproduce them in its daughter churches (ibid, pp. 124-125).

Then the vision becomes the reality.

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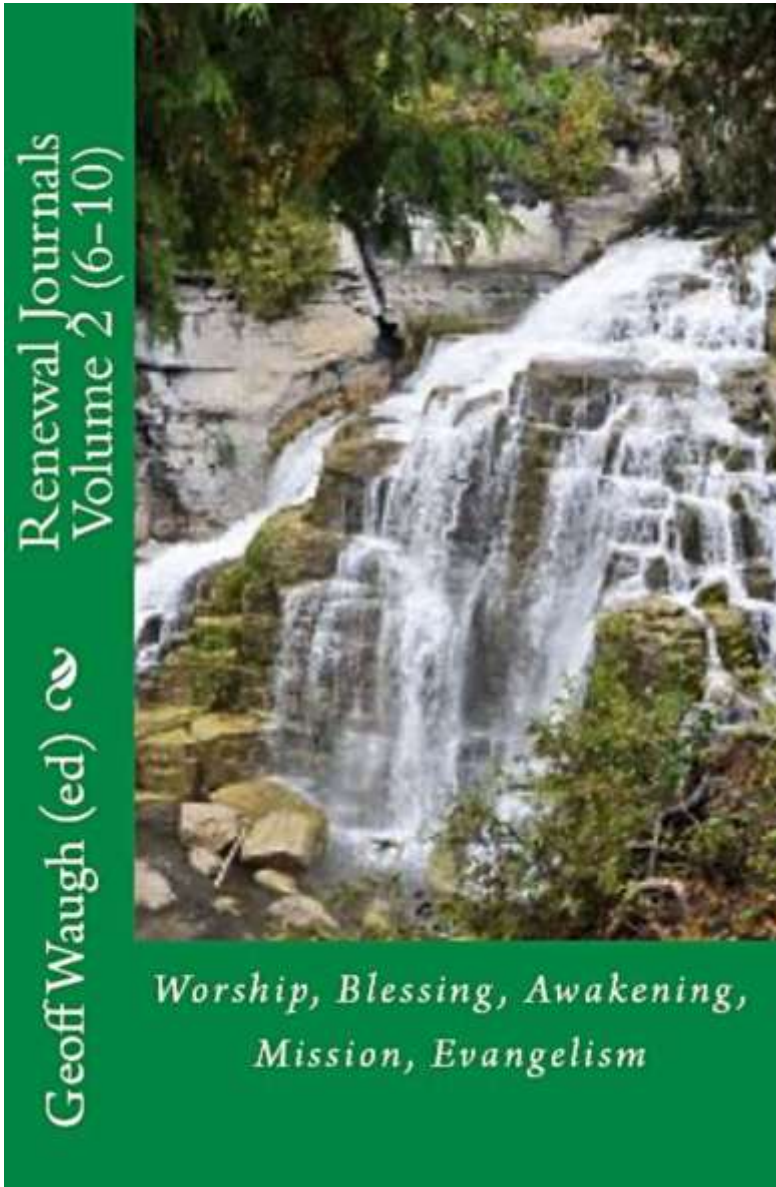
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## 6 *Vision for Ministry*

### Geoff Waugh



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**The task Jesus gave us is still the same.**

**The context of that task keeps changing.**

Accelerating change is changing us and the church. Already the one hour (11 am to noon) hymn-sandwich church service held in a ‘typical’ church building with wooden pews and an organ which stands empty most of the time, is looking like ancient history – and very bad stewardship. It may not be wrong (and God can use anything), but it’s not in the Bible, and it’s fading into history.

Nearly 2000 years ago Jesus gave us our job: “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, so go and make people my disciples ... and I am with you all the way even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

His final promise told us how we would do that: “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).

That's still our job, and we can only do it by the power of the Holy Spirit – as Jesus did. However, the context and the way of doing the job changes constantly.

There's nothing there about buildings, pews, spires, bells, organs, clerical garb, status (except as witnessing servants).

## **Change changed**

Change has changed. It is speeding up. We live in accelerating change. Change changes our ministry, and us. We think, feel and act differently from all previous generations. We perceive each day in new ways now. We plan and do more. Cars, phones, microwaves, TV and the internet have changed us.

Church has changed. Church people walked to the services and socialised together on Sundays for most of history; now millions drive cars, and fill Sunday with many other activities. Church life for most of history involved time with extended families; now families are widely scattered.

### ***1. Accelerating social change***

Alvin Toffler wrote about the Third Wave in sociology. He could find no word adequate to encompass this current wave we live in, rejecting his own earlier term, 'super-industrial', as too narrow. He wrote:

In attempting so large-scale a synthesis, it has become necessary to simplify, generalise, and compress. . . (so) this book divides civilisation into only three parts - *a First Wave agricultural phase, a Second Wave industrial phase, and a Third Wave phase now beginning.*

Humanity faces a quantum leap forward. It faces the deepest social upheaval and creative restructuring of all time. Without clearly recognising it, we are engaged in building a remarkable new civilisation from the ground up. This is the meaning of the Third

Wave.

Put differently ... we are the final generation of an old civilisation and the first generation of a new one ... [living] between the dying Second Wave civilisation and the emergent Third Wave civilisation that is thundering in to take its place. (1)

Think of church life during those three waves.

1. Churches for most of 2000 years of the *First Wave agricultural phase* were the village church with the village priest (taught in a monastery) teaching the Bible to mostly illiterate people, using Latin Bible parchments copied by hand for 1500 years. Worship involved chants without books or music. These churches reflected rural life, with feudal lords and peasants.

2. Churches in 500 years of the *Second Wave industrial phase* (co-existing with the First Wave) became denominational with many different churches in the towns as new denominations emerged. Generations of families belonged there all their life and read the printed Authorised (1511) version of the Bible. They have been taught by ministers trained in denominational theological colleges. Worship has involved organs used with hymns and hymn books. These churches reflected industrial town life, with bureaucracies such as denominations.

3. Churches in 50 years of the *Third Wave technological phase* (co-existing with the Second Wave) are becoming networks of independent churches and movements, among which people move freely. They tend to be led by charismatic, anointed, gifted, 'apostolic' servant-leaders, usually trained on the job through local mentoring using part time courses in distance education. Their people have a wide range of Bible translations and use Bible tools in print, on CDs and on the internet. Worship involves ministry teams using instruments with overhead projection for songs and choruses. These churches reflect third wave technological city life.

Some churches, of course, mix these phases, especially now with the second wave receding and the third wave swelling. For example, some denominational churches, especially those 'in renewal', may have a gifted 'lay' senior pastor not trained in theological college.

Some independent churches have theologically trained pastors with doctoral degrees in ministry. Some denominational churches function like independent churches in their leadership and worship styles.

The huge changes we live through now can be compared to a clock face representing the last 3,000 years, since people recorded history, so each minute represents 50 years. On that scale the printing press came into use about 10 minutes ago. About three minutes ago, the telegraph, photograph and locomotive arrived. Two minutes ago the telephone, rotary press, motion pictures, automobile, aeroplane, radio and emerged. Less than one minute ago television appeared. Less than half a minute ago the computer and then communication satellites became widely used, and the laser beam seconds ago. (2)

A former General Secretary of the United Nations, U Thant, noted that "it is no longer resources that limit decisions. It is the decision that makes the resources." (3) He saw this as the fundamental revolutionary change, the most revolutionary social change we have ever known.

Other writers focus on the problems involved in accelerating change.

We live through problems never experienced before. No nation and no aspect of life can escape their pressure. These include: the expansion of population, the burst of technology, the discovery of new forms of energy, the extension of knowledge, the rise of new nations, and the world-wide rivalry of ideologies. (4)

Accelerating change produces uprooting which causes rootlessness in society through:

1. the repeated moves of so many families (e.g. scattered relatives);
2. the disruption of communities through urban sprawl (e.g. moving to new churches) ;
3. the increasing anonymity of urban life (e.g. the lonely crowd);
4. the disruption of shift work (e.g. longer hours); and
5. the fragmentation of the family (e.g. divorce now common). (5)

We live and minister in this revolutionary 'post-modern' era of rootlessness and changing values. This context gives us increasing opportunities for loving, powerful witness and revival.

## ***2. Accelerating church growth***

Not only is the world population exploding. So is the church. By 1960 the world population had passed 2.5 billion and in 30 years from then doubled to 5 billion. By 2000 it passed 6 billion. However, in most non-Western countries the growth of the church already outstrips the population growth.

About 10% of Africa was Christian in 1900. By 2000 it was about 50% Christian in Africa south of the Sahara. In 1900 Korea had few Christians. Now over 40% of South Korea is Christian. By 1950 about 1 million in China were committed Christians. Now estimates range around 100 million.

Every week approximately one thousand new churches are established in Asia and Africa alone. Places such as Korea, Ethiopia, China, Central America, Indonesia and the Philippines are dramatic flash points of growth.

What kind of church is emerging? Over 500 million Christians are pentecostal/charismatic.

The movement of the Holy Spirit across the world in the twentieth century has far eclipsed the marvellous beginning of that same movement in the early church. It continues to spread. Churches change and grow in power – along with persecution.

Modern developments provide the church with amazing resources. Already reports of radio ministry into China and Russia tell how God uses this medium powerfully, along with spontaneous expansion of the church through signs and wonders. Preachers now reach into the homes of people through television. Millions are being won to Christ through *The Jesus Film* now translated into over 500 languages. Similarly, cassettes and video tapes proliferate, much of all this being closely related to dynamic ministry in the power of the Spirit.

Some fundamental principles now change how we function as a church. These dynamic changes recapture basic biblical principles. They include:

Divine Headship – *from figurehead to functional head.*

Servant Leadership – *from management to equipping*

Church Membership – *from institutional to organic*

Dynamic Networks – *from bureaucracy to relationships*

Body Ministry – *from some to all*

Spiritual Gifts – *from few to many*

Obedient Mission – *from making decisions to making disciples*

Power Evangelism – *from programs to lifestyle*

Kingdom Authority – *from words to deeds*

### **Divine Headship - from figurehead to functional Head.**

A Catholic prayer group in Texas realised that none of them had ever obeyed Luke 14:12-14. They had not fed and clothed the poor who could never repay them. A loving prophetic word from the Lord through a charismatically gifted Sister called them to do that. They all agreed it was from the Lord. So they took enough food for 120 people working everyday (including Christmas day) at the city garbage dump just over the river in Mexico, and they all had Christmas dinner together there in the dump where the people were working. Over 300 people turned up to eat. The food multiplied. People brought relatives and everyone ate. The eight carloads from the prayer group ate. They had enough left over to take food to three orphanages.

Now a lively church exists there. The sick are healed. Everyone at the dump had TB originally. Within four years no one had it. Charismatic doctors see people healed through medicine, prayer and miracles. At regular meetings, not just on Sundays, people have more fun dancing in church than in any dance hall. Their worship involves everyone in singing, dancing, and praying for one another. (6)

If Jesus is really the functional head of his church, not just the figurehead, how does that work? Basically we listen to him, and just do what he says, in any group, anywhere.

The disciples found it almost impossible to conceive of the kingdom of God without equating it with the world's kingdoms. So do we. We also find it almost impossible to conceive of the church without equating it with our human societies.

We tend to run the church according to social patterns. Church structures look like social structures. The word 'church' often refers to some social expression of the church, or to a building, neither of which are biblical. So we have great difficulty with the apparent lack of interest in the New Testament for institutional models of the church.

The New Testament church grew, rapidly. It could be counted: 3,000; 5,000; and great multitudes. This was undoubtedly the church of Jesus Christ, with all its faults. He lived in the midst of his body.

The written and living word express the Lord's headship in his church.

### ***1. The Written Word***

All scripture is the inspired word of God; God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Scripture communicates the word of Christ to his church.

The headship of Christ in his church is eroded or denied when scripture loses its authority. Conservative churches including Charismatic and Pentecostal churches believe the Bible. They believe in miracles, then and now. They believe God answers prayers, then and now. That does not make all they do or say right, but it does preserve what's right – God's Word.

Although church structures and traditions vary, the Word of God provides an anchor and an objective measure of faithfulness or aberration. Jesus was very clear in what he said!

Always there is the unexpected. God's purposes may be known, and yet are unknowable. We continually discover that we have missed large slabs of the total picture. We have the scriptures, as did the theologians of Jesus' day, and like them we often fail to see what is

there. It must be divinely revealed and illuminated to be known.

## **2. *The Living Word***

Scripture and prayer provide a means of communication with Christ our head. Yet, like all means, they are a vehicle of communication, not the communication itself.

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet -  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet. (7)

The body of Christ is a living body, just as the Head is a living head.

Institutional forms and organisational expressions should yield to that. The living body of the living Christ must give substance to that reality. Then the inward union with Christ finds expression in the outward dimensions of church life.

Unless we grasp this, we will continue to secularise all we do, including ministry. A secularised church functions like any other secular society: voting, electing leaders, keeping minutes, and running a bureaucracy. That can easily bypass the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ, the living Head changes all that!

For example, obedience to the Great Commission comes not from mere outward observance of the written word, but naturally from the dynamic life in Christ.

The Living Word transforms the letter into life. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life," said Jesus (John 6:63), and Paul added, "the letter of the law kills, but the spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

Then the Bible comes alive, anointed and empowered by the Spirit who inspired it. Preaching becomes prophetic words from God as we wield the sharp two-edged sword of the Spirit. Teaching lights fires in minds, hearts and wills. Serving gives Christ's love and healing through his responsive body, the church. Prayer is transformed into intimate communion and sensitive response to



the Lord, our Head. Faith grows bold and strong. The church grows with unleashed power when Christ is no longer the figurehead or absentee land-lord but sovereign Lord with kingdom authority.

Carl Lawrence gives an outstanding example of this in his book *The Coming Influence of China*. (8) A full account is reproduced in *Renewal Journal* No. 12: Harvest. Two teenage girls ‘just prayed and obeyed’ as they were led by the Lord. They established 30 churches in two years on Hainan Island in China. The smallest had 220 people, and the largest nearly 5,000 people.

That kind of radical obedience to Christ the Head of his church produces a radical biblical kind of leadership in the church.

### **Servant Leadership - from management to equipping**

Leadership in the body of Christ, as in the kingdom of God, is very different from all other leadership in human society. Authentic Christian leadership is Spirit-filled, Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered, hidden and charismatic, yet manifested in power and visible institutionally.

Bishop Stephen Neill notes:

There has been a great deal of talk in recent years about the development of leadership ... But is the idea of “leadership” biblical and Christian, and can we make use of it without doing grave injury to the very cause that we wish to serve? . . .

How far is the conception of “leadership” really one which we ought to encourage? It is so hard to use it without being misled by the non-Christian conception of leadership. It has been truly said that our need is not for leaders, but for saints and servants. Unless this fact is held steadily in the foreground, the whole idea of leadership training becomes dangerous. (9)

Jesus raised these issues also. They touch on the fundamental dimensions of servanthood and equipping for ministry.

### **1. Servanthood**

The radical nature of Jesus' leadership, what he demanded of his followers, is best expressed in his words:

In Matthew 20:25-28, in response to the request of James and John for leadership or prominence in the coming kingdom and in answer to the other disciples' reaction to this request, Jesus said, *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant - and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Jesus insists that the world's concept of leadership must not operate in his church: *"Not so with you."* Leadership is not about position or hierarchy or authority; it is a question of function and of service. The greatness of a Christian is not in status but in servanthood.

Jesus underscored his revolutionary teaching: greatness comes not through being served, but through serving. In God's kingdom the standard of achievement is found not in exercising power over others, but in ministering to them and empowering them.

Jesus dramatically illustrated this teaching by washing his disciples' feet. Then he told them to do just what he had done: *"If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, so you must also wash one another's feet"* (John 13:14). That lesson was so important that he gave it to them a final act of love just before he died.

Jesus rejected both political and religious authority. He established Kingdom authority - serving others. His rejection of earthly power is so revolutionary that his disciples continually missed it. So do we.

What pain we could save 'the church' and what awful church-split sins we could avoid if we understood and obeyed this basic biblical principle! Church splits don't happen where people love, serve, and truly forgive one another. You may be 'right' (in theology or practice) but if you split the church then you are very wrong.

Where would Jesus fit in our traditional church patterns today? Would he savagely attack the political power plays and status seeking leadership? Would he call our divisions sin? Would he denounce in scathing terms the religious pomp and ceremony? Would he absolutely reject hierarchical positions, titles, and garb. Once he did.

Even more fundamental to the nature of the kingdom and the ministry of the church are other questions. Would he disturb the meetings? Would he cast out demons? Would he heal? Would his preaching so provoke his hearers that they would oppose him? Would he be more at home outside our religious systems than within them? Would he so threaten our systems that we would denounce, expel or ignore him?

Leaders in many persecuted churches, where the church grows powerfully, face all that now. That's where you see servant leadership most clearly!

"Who serves?" is a very different question from "Who leads?"

Does this do away with leadership? Yes and no. It does away with the world's kind of leadership. It requires the Kingdom's kind of leadership, which is servant leadership led by the Spirit of God.

Terry Fulham (in *Miracle at Darien*) demonstrated that kind of Kingdom leadership in an Episcopal church in America. He accepted 'leadership' on the basis that no decision would ever be made by the elders (or board) until they were in total unity in the Spirit. No vote would ever be needed. They believed Jesus could lead his church. So they required unity. If unity could not be attained, they waited and prayed till it was.

The New Testament regards all Christians as ministers and servants. Body ministry must be servant ministry. If leadership is a legitimate term for kingdom life and body ministry, it must be servant leadership.

It is both a radical leadership style among other styles and also the life-style of every Christian. It is the ministry of every member of

Christ's body. The great leaders in the Kingdom may be the least obvious – humbly and courageously serving others, unnoticed.

## ***2. Equipping for Ministry***

Some servant leaders are called and anointed to equip others for ministry.

In one sense we are all called and anointed to do that. Some as parents, raising children. Some as carers, showing others how to care. Some as team leaders, serving and inspiring the team and empowering them for service also.

Among spiritual gifts there are different ministries including leadership and administration. Our problem is that those words carry so much political and hierarchical freight that we can hardly use them without distorting them.

Leadership in Christ's body means service, ministry, and being least or last, not greatest or first. The first shall be last, and the last first, Jesus said. Leadership is a spiritual function of serving and empowering, dependent on spiritual giftedness, not just on human ability.

Jesus Christ, not personality or achievement, makes leaders. The Ephesians 4 passage is a clear statement of that kind of giftedness. He appoints some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in his body to equip (by serving) the members of that body for their ministry.

Michael Harper summarises their function as:

Let my people go - the apostolic function of the Church  
Let my people hear - the prophetic function of the Church  
Let my people grow - the evangelistic function of the Church  
Let my people care - the pastoral function of the Church  
Let my people know - the teaching function of the Church

Go to my people  
Speak to my people

Reach my people  
Care for my people  
Teach my people. (10)

Leadership gifts in the body of Christ equip that body for ministry. Again, using such loaded terms, it needs to be stressed that this is quite different from mere human ability to lead; it is spiritual giftedness. Like other spiritual gifts, it may find expression in and through natural ability, but it is then natural ability anointed in Spirit-led power.

The amazingly diverse, flexible nature of spiritual leadership needs emphasis. No one model has it all, even though we all are called to be servant leaders.

Paul's way of developing leaders was to recognise and encourage the special gift and role of each person, especially elders. Paul was undoubtedly a leader, a servant leader in the strong sense of the term. He served with his apostolic gifts. He equipped the body for ministry.

The term servant leader recaptures essential dimensions of the equipping ministry. So long as 'leader' is understood charismatically as spiritual giftedness, it becomes stronger than ever. Christ, head of his body, gives that kind of equipping leadership to members of his body. Enormous authority is vested in that understanding of servant leadership, precisely because those leaders serve others, and equip others for ministry.

This specific equipping ministry in the body applies especially to leadership of large churches. As a church grows larger, it is vital that the pastor be an equipper. The ministry will be done by the whole body, not just the 'leader'. No one person can do it all.

Body ministry requires leadership which is both humble and powerful, leading by serving. All spiritual gifts need to function this way, especially leadership gifts. Powerful leadership grows from humble service.

### **Church Membership - from institutional to organic**

We are members of Christ's church; that sounds institutional.

We are members of Christ's body; that sounds organic.  
In fact, the two can be one!

The church must find its expression in human society, so it must have institutional characteristics. They may be as simple as a home group gathering regularly together, or as complex as a multi-million dollar denominational agency. As the institutional forms grow more complex, their vested interests become more binding and conformity to the world usually increases.

The Holy Spirit cannot be confined by institutionalisation. He never has been. He continually breaks free of human limitations and blows where he will. Christ, by the power of his Spirit is building his church.

Instead of a dictatorship or a democracy, God has chosen to make the Body of Christ an organism with Christ as the head and each member functioning with spiritual gifts. Understanding spiritual gifts, then is the key to understanding the true organisation of the church.

The charismatic nature of the church as Christ's body will be expressed through the spiritual gifts of its members. So both the charismatic dimension and the institutional dimension co-exist in the church; the former being its essence, the latter its cultural or social expression.

### ***1. The Organism***

The body of Christ is an organism, a community, with interpersonal relationships, mutuality and interdependence. It is flexible and leaves room for a high degree of spontaneity. The Bible gives us this model for the church: the human body (1 Corinthians 12).

The charismatic dimension in both ministry and organisation does not do away with professional abilities and functions but fills them with the active, powerful presence of Christ by his Spirit and so transforms them from being merely professional to being charismatically gifted as well as professionally competent.

For example, a professional counsellor may be less effective than a non-professional friend who ministers love and care in the power of the Spirit of God. The dynamic power of charismatic ministry lies in the active presence of God's Spirit filling that ministry or at least guiding it. However, a Spirit-filled, Spirit-led professional counsellor draws powerfully on both gifting and training.

Implications for church organisation are enormous. Although the professional tasks and organisations will probably continue, the ministry of the whole body will require very flexible forms which allow and intentionally foster body ministry. Counselling, teaching, preaching, social care and evangelism are all transformed by the Holy Spirit guiding and empowering those activities.

Charismatic Anglican David Watson gives an example of this from his own experience. As the church he pastored in York grew into fuller expressions of charismatic life it needed restructuring to provide adequate pastoral care through elders who were charismatically gifted as pastors not just elected to fill an institutional role of leadership. They cared for area groups, especially mentoring the group leaders. (11)

Watson emphasises that where Christ is central and head of his body, he will provide charismatic leadership through gifted elders who in turn lead or care for the whole body, especially through pastoring and teaching gifts in the small groups or cells of the body. An organic model of the church expresses the real headship of Christ in his body and his ministry through the spiritual gifts of his people in body ministry.

Revival in Bogotá (see article in this issue) tells that kind of story dramatically in 2001.

Paul was clear on this. Within the body of Christ apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers equip the body for ministry so that the body members, using their spiritual gifts, can do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4).

Paul's three main passages on the church as the body of Christ give basic lists of spiritual gifts for charismatic ministry. Others could be added. The Ephesians 4:11-12 list refers specifically to charismatic

leadership in the church, given by Christ, the risen and ascended conqueror, to equip the members of his body for the work of ministry. Aspects of that equipment are included in the various lists of spiritual gifts. Each passage emphasises the importance of ministering in love and unity.

## **2. *The Organisation***

In times of accelerating change and exploding church growth, the institutional model of the church needs to be flexible and responsive to its environment. Further, if it is to allow a truly charismatic ministry to function with strong spiritual gifts, it must be sensitive and responsive to the Holy Spirit, all the time.

The early church gives a startlingly clear picture of such a flexible institutional model. They were constantly led and empowered by the Spirit. They were very human, with typical faults and problems. The New Testament authors wrote mostly to fix those problems, especially in the epistles.

They met in many house churches, still as the one church in one place, inter-related. It was extremely flexible, needed everyone's involvement, and could multiply anywhere. The church in China today, and in African villages, and in Latin American communities, uses this same organisation.

The institutional model of the church then was a house church model. That model has been repeated all through history, and in many parts of the world today is the means of flexible rapid church growth. Most large churches use this model in home groups.

Organisational membership often involves attending the meetings, paying the dues, abiding by the rules, and possibly being elected or appointed to office. Any society can do that. Most do.

Organic membership of the body, however, functions by living in Christ and ministering in spiritual gifts.

These two kinds of membership need to be differentiated when discussing church membership. Usually "church membership"



means club membership; it is an institutional expression of the church. Usually “body membership” means the organic functioning of the members of Christ’s body, and its members being united by the Spirit of God in the one body, the church.

Organisational habits can reverse their meaning over years. Calvin in Geneva, for example, refused to identify with clerical pomp and wore the poor man’s cloak when preaching, but in time that turned into the Geneva gown, a clerical institution. Francis of Assisi also wore a poor man’s cloak, which has now become a religious uniform quite unrelated to what the poor now wear.

Those quirks are minor compared with the massive maintenance programs of large religious institutions. Denominations which came into being for mission, often breaking away from hardened institutional forms, in turn become maintenance-oriented and lose the very vision which gave them birth.

The organisational form of the church needs to be continually responsive to the Head of the church, or it becomes secularised and the Spirit of God is quenched. Leadership in the church must be especially responsive to the Spirit to avoid this.

Organisational life in the church can remain flexible and responsive to the Head of the church as it keeps its organic life alive in the power of the Spirit.

### **Dynamic Networks - from bureaucracy to relational groups**

Networks of groups increasingly replace bureaucracy. Short term task groups replace committees. Networks of independent churches and groups are replacing historic denominations.

Spirit-filled groups or communities give one simple example, now affecting multiplied millions of people. People relate in home groups, house churches, mission groups, independent churches, and renewal or revival movements everywhere. So your home group may have people who were Catholic, or Anglican, or Methodist, or Baptist, or Hindu, or New Age.

Second Wave churches, for example, in earlier days could insist on loyalty to the denominational bureaucracy and policy lines. Now people choose from networks of the ecclesiastical smorgasbord. Television, mobility and education all shift our consciousness and increase our awareness and choices, including church life. That is how renewal and revival have been spreading.

A current example is the grassroots spread of charismatic renewal and revival.

In First Wave rural villages with little outside influence, little change occurred - "We've always done it this way."

In Second Wave town churches 'renewal' could be kept outside the denomination by being banished to another bureaucracy, and therefore ignored - "Join the Pentecostals and don't rock the boat."

Third Wave society opens new networks of information and experience. Our increasing mobility brings us into contact with renewal and revival. Our extended education opens our minds to these new insights. Our television portrays the power of God in healing and our worldview begins to shift. Our friends give us paperbacks to read or cassettes to hear and videos to see, and conviction or hope grows within us. Our visitors or home group leaders tell of their experiences and we seek what they've found. Our friends pray for us and God releases his Spirit more fully in our lives. Yet all of this happens outside the denominational bureaucracy, or it may do so.

So Wagner's "third wave" of renewal is carried on Toffler's Third Wave of social change into all church structures. Our friendship networks become 'the bridges of God' into our churches and out into the lives of others. Significantly, no pastor or minister may be involved. People witness to people. People now have the Bible tools, education, and friendships to check it out.

Those changes catapult us into new expressions of ministry.

## **Body Ministry - from some to all.**

Body Ministry involves the biblical pattern of ministry in the church, the body of Christ.

Body Ministry is the ministry of the whole body of Christ. It functions through the use of spiritual gifts in all the members of the body. The unity of the Spirit of God finds expression in the incredible diversity of spiritual gifts and ministries.

The Reformation rediscovered the authority of the Bible and the wonderful gift of God's grace in providing salvation by faith in Jesus. Unfortunately it failed to free the church from the rule of the priest or pastor, so carried that form of leadership into the Protestant church, producing a drastic clergy-laity division. Spiritual gifts in the whole body of Christ were largely ignored.

Body ministry, then, is not limited to church meetings, although the meetings need to express body life as well. That ministry is total. It finds expression in all of life.

Ray Stedman popularised the term "body life" in his book by that name thirty years ago. He used body life services in which people could share needs or testimonies. Body life becomes body ministry as people apply their spiritual gifts to those needs in the church and in society in ministry.

Body Life teaching opened the way for a fuller apprehension and use of spiritual gifts in shared life and ministry. That in turn has opened the way for a fuller discovery of the dynamic power of body ministry in Kingdom authority.

## **Spiritual Gifts - from few to many**

Body ministry requires spiritual gifts. The body of Christ ministers charismatically. There is no other way it can minister as the living body of the living Christ. He ministers in and through his body, by the gifts of his Spirit.

Charismatic gifts of the Spirit differ from natural talents. We can do

much through dedicated human talent, but that is not body ministry through spiritual gifts. Natural talents do need to be committed to God and used for his glory. They can be channels of spiritual gifts, but may not be.

Spiritual gifts constantly surprise us. God uses whom he chooses, and chooses whom he will. Spiritual gifts often show up with great power in unlikely people and in unlikely ways.

A common misunderstanding, for instance, is that those with an effective healing ministry must be especially holy people. They may not be. Gifts of the Spirit are given by grace, not earned by consecration. Young, immature Christians may have powerful spiritual ministries, as they discover and use their spiritual gifts. Many do. That is no proof of consecration or maturity, even though to please God we need to offer ourselves to him in full commitment.

Romans Chapter 12 gives a surprising example of this. The well known first two verses challenge us to offer ourselves fully to God and so discover his will for our lives. Paul then explains that knowing God's will involves being realistic about ourselves and our gifts. If we know and use our God-given gifts, we fulfil God's will for our lives.

Body ministry, then, depends on the use of spiritual gifts, not just the use of natural talents dedicated to God. Both are vital for committed Christian living, and both will be present in the church. However, the church is not built on committed natural talent, even though churches often seem to operate that way. Body ministry involves the use of spiritual gifts.

For example two people may have the talent of beautiful singing voices. Both will sing in worship and even on the platform in ministry. One, however, may be anointed with a prophetic gift in song, and the other may not be. That gifting will move hearts and wills in the power of God's Spirit. Christ gives those gifts - we don't create them. Some of these gifts of God's Spirit, received for ministry, will be blessed in ministry in and through natural talent as well, but the key to body ministry is not the talent. It is the spiritual gift.

Similarly, spiritual gifts are not Christian roles or tasks. All Christians witness, but only some are gifted in evangelism. Every Christian has faith, but some have a gift of faith as well. All must exercise hospitality, but some are gifted in hospitality. Prayer is for all of us, but some are gifted in intercession.

Spiritual gifts operate in unity with diversity.

### **1. Unity**

Paul's passages on spiritual gifts all emphasise unity expressed in diversity (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4).

Without that unity expressed in love, the diversity destroys the body's ministry causing chaos, division, sectarianism, and impotence. This is Paul's theme in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

The Corinthians did not need teaching on the reality of spiritual gifts nor on their diversity. They knew that. In fact, they abused that. So Paul had to correct the fault by emphasizing the unity of the body, bound together in love. Gifts are not to be a source of division and strife, but an expression of unity and love. Unless rooted and grounded in love, the gifts are counter-productive.

Unity in the body of Christ allows that body to function well, not be crippled. No one has all the gifts. We all need one another. No one should be conceited about any gift that God has given. No one must think his or her gift the most important, and magnify and exalt it at the expense of others. All gifts must be used in humility and service. We do not compete. We minister in harmony and co-operation.

Paul's great theme, "in Christ," expresses the unity essential for body ministry. In Christ we are one body. In Christ we live and serve. Love lies at the heart of body ministry. The body is one, bound in love. The body builds itself up in love (Eph. 4:16). That is why 1 Corinthians 13 is central to Paul's passage on spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. "Make love your aim," he insists, "and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

Jesus insisted on love. "A new commandment I give to you, that you

love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Our unity is not based on doctrine, or methods. Our unity comes from who we are, the body of Christ. Paul states this as a fact, not a hope. We are one in Christ. We are one in the Spirit. God has made us one. That unity is expressed in body ministry.

It shows in our attitude - in humility, kingdom thinking, and love. It smashes competition and critical spirits, especially between different people and groups with different gifts.

Breathtaking community transformations are now happening around the world where we live this truth in united ministry. See articles in this issue of this Journal!

## **2. Diversity**

That unity is expressed in the diversity of gifts. There is one Spirit; his gifts are incredibly diverse.

The point is developed in all the body passages of Paul. Diversity is to be celebrated, not squashed; encouraged, not smothered; developed, not ignored.

The church may be two or three, or two or three hundred, or two or three thousand. Different sizes will have different ministries or functions, such as cell, congregation or celebration, but all are the church. Christ is present in his body. So are his gifts. Again, different gifts will be appropriate for different expressions of that body's ministry, but it is one body.

Body ministry will use these gifts. God's Spirit moves among his people in power to meet needs and minister effectively. Those gifts need to be identified and used, and in the process, as in Jesus' ministries, special anointings will come.

Preaching, for example, will often become prophecy as it is anointed by the Spirit of God. That prophetic ministry may happen

unexpectedly in the process of a sermon. It may also be given in preparation as a word directly from the Lord.

Compassionate service and healing administrations will at times be anointed powerfully by God's presence in signs and wonders to heal. Role, gift and anointing then merge into strongly focused spiritual ministry.

So role, spiritual gift, and anointings cannot be clearly divided. Indeed, as the Spirit of God moves in still greater power among all members of the body of Christ, the ministry of that body will be increasingly anointed.

Then the professional is swallowed up in the spiritual; natural ability is suffused and flooded with supernatural life; the human is filled with the divine.

Jesus lived this way. No one need envy another's gifts or ministry. All are needed.

### **Obedient Mission - from making decisions to making disciples**

Christ himself, head of his church, clearly stated the church's mission. He did so on many occasions between his resurrection and ascension. The powerful dimension of the Great Commission has often been overlooked. Jesus himself emphasised our mission couldn't be done without the power of his Spirit. That is the point of all the power promises in the Great Commission:

**Matthew** records it: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me . . . and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:18-20).

**Mark** records it: "These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

**Luke** records it: "I send the promise of my Father upon you; but

stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

**John** records it: “He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit ...’ (John 20:22).

**Acts** records it: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

When empowered and led by the Holy Spirit (who is the Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of God, Gal. 4:6), mission is powerful. Then we do not make plans and execute them in human wisdom and strength, but seek divine wisdom and strength.

Empowering by the Spirit of God and being led by the Spirit of God are central to obedient mission. We cannot claim obedience to the Great Commission when we do God’s work in our strength or our own ways and wisdom.

The Great Commission is not merely an external command to hard to obey. It is an internal compulsion, ignited in us by the Spirit of God. The Spirit has been given to the Church because it is her essence and nature to be a witnessing body.

Consequently, a church which is not evangelistic, nor missionary, nor empowered, is an apostate church. We begin to see the magnitude of our apostasy when we compare our churches with the biblical norm. We only need an evangelical movement or a missionary movement or a charismatic movement because we have fallen so far.

Body ministry, then, will obey the Head of the body, move in his authority, filled with the power of his Spirit. The Great Commission begins with the absolute authority of Christ in his church and all the cosmos; it issues in obedient mission, exercised within that authority, and exercising that authority in powerful ministry.

Powerful body ministry flows from obedient disciples, who, individually and as a body, obey their Lord.

The Great Commission calls for this total task of ‘making disciples’



in terms of becoming disciples in the body of Christ and growing in discipleship. It is one process. The kind of evangelism required for church growth and stated in the Great Commission is evangelism which makes disciples, not merely gets people to make decisions. Those decisions may be inadequate and fail to make disciples.

Wholistic evangelism and conversion can be summarised as involving:

Priority One: Commitment to Christ.

Priority Two: Commitment to the body of Christ.

Priority Three: Commitment to the work of Christ in the world. (12)

Jesus would not turn aside from his redemptive mission. He lived fully in the kingdom realm. He did only his Father's will, not his own. So everything he did was mission. Within that mission, his evangelism was not meetings or a program. He saved. Those he touched were made whole when there was faith. He said, "Follow me." That was his program. He still calls us to follow him in obedient mission.

## **Power Evangelism - from programs to lifestyle**

Spiritual gifts can release body ministry for effective power evangelism. The New Testament pattern of evangelism is always Kingdom words combined with Kingdom deeds.

A major shift in evangelism always evident in revivals, and increasingly evident now moves from program evangelism to power evangelism as a lifestyle of all members of the body of Christ, as John Wimber reminded us.

### **1. Program Evangelism**

Programs of evangelism can be effective. Crusade evangelism has won thousands to Christ. Saturation evangelism, especially in Latin America, has reached every home in target communities with the gospel message. Personal evangelism such as door-to-door programs have reached many people. Some churches have focused on seeker services or outreach services aimed at reaching the unsaved, and often done so effectively.

All of these programs and many more have been significant means of evangelism. So, we thank God for so much evangelism which has won thousands to Christ.

However, we must also recognize that thousands and even millions of dollars spent on evangelism programs and all the time and work involved do not always bear abundant fruit.

Wagner, for example, noted that 'Key 73' in America touched over 100,000 congregations without any noticeable change in patterns of growth across the board. (13)

Win Arn reported on 'Here's Life America' noting that only 3.3% of those who recorded decisions became active members of any church, and 42% of them came by transfer. After polling over 4,000 converts Win Arn discovered that 70% - 80% of them came into the church through relatives and friends, whereas less than 1% came as direct result of city-wide evangelism campaigns. (14)

Lyle Schaller similarly discovered that 60 - 90% of people involved in the church were brought by some friend or relative. (15)

*Programs are not as effective as body evangelism through the local church. Body evangelism involves more people in the church than many programs do, is the natural way most people are brought into the church, and can be the focus of church life in a lifestyle of evangelism.*

Program evangelism may be useful, but it needs to link strongly with the local church and be a natural expression of that church's life and witness. Program evangelism, however, falls short of the biblical model. It is needed because the church fails to be what the church should be! Body evangelism calls for more. It requires the involvement of the whole body of Christ in the power of his Spirit.

## ***2. Power Evangelism***

The biblical model goes beyond program evangelism. It is depth centred in Jesus' promise: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses ..." (Acts

1:8).

John Wimber emphasized the importance of power evangelism:

Power Evangelism ... transcends the rational. It happens with the demonstration of God's power in Signs and Wonders, and introduces the numinous of God. This presupposes a presentation accompanied with the manifest presence of God. Power Evangelism is spontaneous and is directed by the Holy Spirit. The result is often explosive church growth. ...

The issue is not what the church is doing. The issue is what the church is leaving out! Where is the promised power of Acts 1:8? Where are the demonstrations of the manifest presence of God that we see illustrated throughout the book of Acts? Were they only for that day? Do they occur today? If so, can we get in on it? Is it possible for you and me to work the works of Jesus?

Power Evangelism is still God's way of explosively growing His church. (16)

Examples multiply by the millions now. (17)

(a) David Adney reporting on China says:

In one area where there were 4,000 Christians before the revolution, the number has now increased to 90,000 with a thousand meeting places. Christians in the region give three reasons for the rapid increase: The faithful witness of Christians in the midst of suffering, the power of God seen in healing the sick, and the influence of Christian radio broadcast from outside.

(b) John Hurston, associated with the world's largest church, Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul, Korea, where David Yonggi Cho is pastor, attributed the phenomenal growth of that church to "the constant flow of God's miracle power" from the beginning.

(c) A third example is from Wagner's observations:

In Latin America I saw God at work. I saw exploding churches. I saw preaching so powerful that hardened sinners broke and

yielded to Jesus' love. I saw miraculous healings. I met with people who had spoken to God in visions and dreams. I saw Christians multiplying themselves time and again. I saw broken families reunited. I saw poverty and destitution overcome by God's living Word. I saw hate turn to love.

Power evangelism fulfils the biblical pattern of body ministry and evangelism. It goes beyond programs to the mighty acts of God in the midst of his people. Christ is alive in his church by the power of His Spirit.

The church is true to the kingdom of God when, like Jesus, the signs of the kingdom are manifest in powerful ministry.

The church spontaneously expands through power evangelism. It is one facet of dynamic body ministry; a natural result of a healthy body, filled with the life of God. That transformed body will explode in mission. It is already in many countries.

The emerging church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is increasingly involved in power evangelism under the Kingdom authority of Jesus himself.

### **Kingdom Authority - from words to deeds**

Christ is king. In Paul's later writings he emphasises this dimension in relationship to the church as Christ's body. He reigns in and through his body, the church. Yet that rule is also cosmic, of which the church is now a part and therefore directly involved in cosmic principalities and powers. Kingdom authority is integrally part of the church's life and mission as the body of Christ.

In Colossians 1, Paul explains that Christ alone is 'the image of the invisible God' and is pre-eminent over everything and everyone (v. 15). This includes being 'the head the body, the church' (v. 18). He is not just another divine being but in him alone 'all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell' (v.19). In his death and resurrection he triumphed not merely over sin and death but over the cosmic powers also (v. 20).

In Ephesians 1, Paul emphasises that Christ is pre-eminent over the

cosmic powers. He is 'far above all rule and authority and power and dominion' (v. 21) and 'head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all' (vs. 22-23). Paul then explains how this applies to the church which is his one body, not many different bodies (4:4). The ascended Head of the church gives spiritual gifts to his church, all of which come from Christ (vs 7-8). These include spiritually gifted leaders to equip us all 'for the work of ministry' and to build up the body of Christ (v. 12).

These passages from Paul lift the concept of the church as the body of Christ way beyond a cosy club of personal support and encouragement. Support and encouragement must be in the body, but any human society could give that if it's members care for one another.

The body of Christ is something more. It is the body of Christ the King. Like the kingdom of God, Christ's rule has been established and is yet to be realised fully. So the ministry of the body of Christ is his powerful ministry.

The ascended, victorious, all powerful Christ, having conquered sin and death and hell now reigns supreme. He is the head of his body, the church. He gives gifts to his church, specifically those called under his authority to exercise authority in the church as leaders so that all God's people may be equipped by him for his ministry in and through us. *That is body ministry.*

Signs, wonders and fantastic church growth characterised the early church as normal Kingdom life burst out in the powerful ministry of the body of Christ. Body ministry demonstrated kingdom authority. As in Jesus' ministry, the early church ministered in signs and wonders (Acts 2:43), prayed for signs and wonders, and expected more signs and wonders (Acts 4:30; 5:12-16).

Granted, the church is often weak. Kingdom life often lies untapped. Christians, and the church, corrupted and weakened by disobedience or faithlessness (the lack of faith which results in sin), may fail to manifest kingdom Life.

However, accelerating church growth in the power of the Spirit of

God points to the greatest demonstration of kingdom life and power the world has even known. Yet, as in the life of Jesus, it can remain hidden from those who, seeing, will not see, and hearing, will not hear (Isa. 6:9-10 Mt. 13:14-15; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10; Jn.12: 40; Acts 28: 26-27). The kingdom is manifest, yet hidden; revealed, yet concealed. Those who ask, receive it; those who seek, find it; to those who knock, the door of the kingdom is opened. And the church has the keys!

The Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus. That message was in powerful words and deeds. Christ, the Messianic King, incarnate in his human body, proclaimed the kingdom of God as immanent. He called for response in repentance and faith (Mk.1:15). His parables described the mysteries of the Kingdom. His miracles displayed its power and authority (Mt. 12:28). You cannot separate, in the evangelistic ministry of Jesus, proclamation and demonstration, preaching and acting, saying and doing.

Similarly, Jesus gave that authority and power to his disciples: “preach as you go, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons” (Mt. 10: 7,8).

This same message and powerful ministry were normal in the early church. Throughout the whole of Acts, in almost every chapter a demonstration of the Kingdom accompanies the proclamation of the gospel.

The clash of kingdoms emerges as a strong theme in the epistles also. The church contends against the principalities and the powers, the world rulers of this dark age, the spiritual hosts of wickedness (Eph.6:12). Each member of Christ’s body, then, has been redeemed from captivity and set free by Christ to serve the King.

The body of Christ must be seen as the agent of the kingdom of God, where Christ rules in power and still proclaims that reality through his church, both in living word and dynamic deed.

The kingdom of God is much more than an evangelical ‘born again’ experience, or a concern for social justice, or a communal interest in

loving relationships, or a charismatic quest for personal victory. It is all these and much more. It is the cosmic clash of kingdoms. It is the church smashing the gates of hell to release the captives. It is the spreading reign of God in Christ upon the earth. It is the eternal purpose of God being fulfilled in restoring and reconciling all things in the universe to himself.

God reigns. Christ is King. His Spirit endues his church with kingdom life and power. Jesus himself declared the kingdom charter, quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).

Body ministry, then is powerful ministry by the body of Christ. It must include the signs of the kingdom as well as the words of the kingdom. Spiritual gifts, imparted by the victorious Christ through his Spirit, empower Christ's body for authentic mission in the world.

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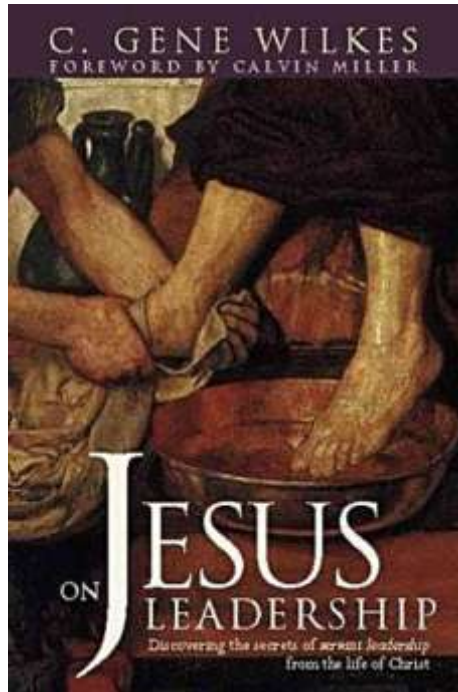
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<sup>17</sup> Examples from Wimber, op. cit. pp. 5, 7, 12.



## *Book Reviews*



*Jesus on Leadership* by Gene Wilkes (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1998). Review from the Foreword by Calvin Miller.

Gene Wilkes knows the literature of leadership but that is not why this book is the finest of its kind in the marketplace. There are four major contributors to Gene Wilkes's greatness as a scholar and teacher. These same four forces permeate this book and make it a must for all of those who want to become informed and capable leaders.

First, Gene Wilkes loves Jesus. Please don't think this a mere saccharine appraisal between friends. This simplicity provides Gene his passion to serve both God and his congregation. Further, this love for Christ carries a subtle and pervasive authenticity that makes Gene Wilkes believable. Whether you read him or hear him lecture, you walk away from the experience knowing that what you've heard is the truth - the life-changing truth from a man who lives the truth and loves getting to the bottom of things. All this I believe derives from his love of Christ.

Second, Gene is a practitioner of servant leadership. When he encourages you to pick up the basin and towel and wash feet, you may be sure it is not empty theory. He teaches others what he has learned in the laboratory of his own experience. Gene is a servant leader, and even as he wrote this book, he directed his very large church through a massive building program. His church leadership ability, which he exhibited during this writing project, does not surface in this volume, but it undergirds and authenticates it.

Third, Gene Wilkes knows better than anyone else the literature of leadership. As you read this book, you will quickly feel his command of his subject. Footnotes will come and go, and behind the thin lines of numbers, ibids, and the like you will feel the force of his understanding. No one knows the field of both secular and Christian leadership like this man. So *Jesus on Leadership* is a mature essay. It has come from the only man I know with this vast comprehension of the subject.

Finally, Gene Wilkes is a born writer. It is not often that good oral communicators are good with the pen. But throughout this book, you will find the paragraphs coming and going so smoothly that you will be hard pressed to remember you are reading a definitive and scholarly work. Books that are this critically important should not be so much fun. Gene Wilkes is to leadership what Barbara Tuchman is to history. You know it's good for you and are surprised to be so delighted at taking the strong medicine that makes the world better.

Here are the chapter headings:

Down from the head table:  
Jesus' model of servant leadership

Principle 1: Humble your heart  
Humility: the living example

Principle 2: First be a follower  
Jesus led so that others could be followers

Principle 3: Find greatness in service  
Jesus demonstrating greatness

Principle 4: Take risks  
Jesus, the great risk taker

Principle 5: Take up the trowel  
Jesus' power – through service

Principle 6: Share responsibility and authority  
How did Jesus do it?

Principle 7: Build a team  
The team Jesus built

And some great quotes from page 2:

All true work combines [the] two elements of serving and ruling. Ruling is what we do; serving is how we do it. There's true sovereignty in all good work. There's no way to exercise it rightly other than by serving.

Eugene Patterson, *Leap over a Wall*

Above all, leadership is a position of servanthood.  
Max Deere, *Leadership Jazz*

The principle of service is what separates true leaders from glory seekers.

Laurie Beth Jones, *Jesus, CEO*

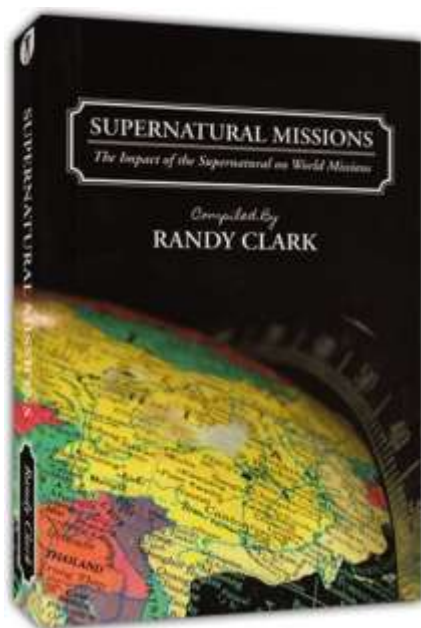
People are supposed to serve. Life is a mission, not a career.

Stephen R. Covey, *The Leader of the Future*

Ultimately the choice we make is between service and self-interest.  
Peter Block, *Stewardship, Choosing Service over Self-Interest*

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

JESUS, Luke 14:11



***Supernatural Missions, by Randy Clark (Global Awakening)***

<http://globalawakeningstore.com/Supernatural-Missions.html>

Randy Clark has again blessed and challenged us with his compiled book ***Supernatural Missions***. It helps to fill a huge gap in mission literature, applying the theory and theology of mission in the Spirit's power to world mission, including short term missions.

Randy's accumulated wisdom and experience in doing supernatural mission around the world fills the book with convincing examples. He demonstrates from many diverse

countries how God moves powerfully on people, leaders and nations as we believe, pray and obey.

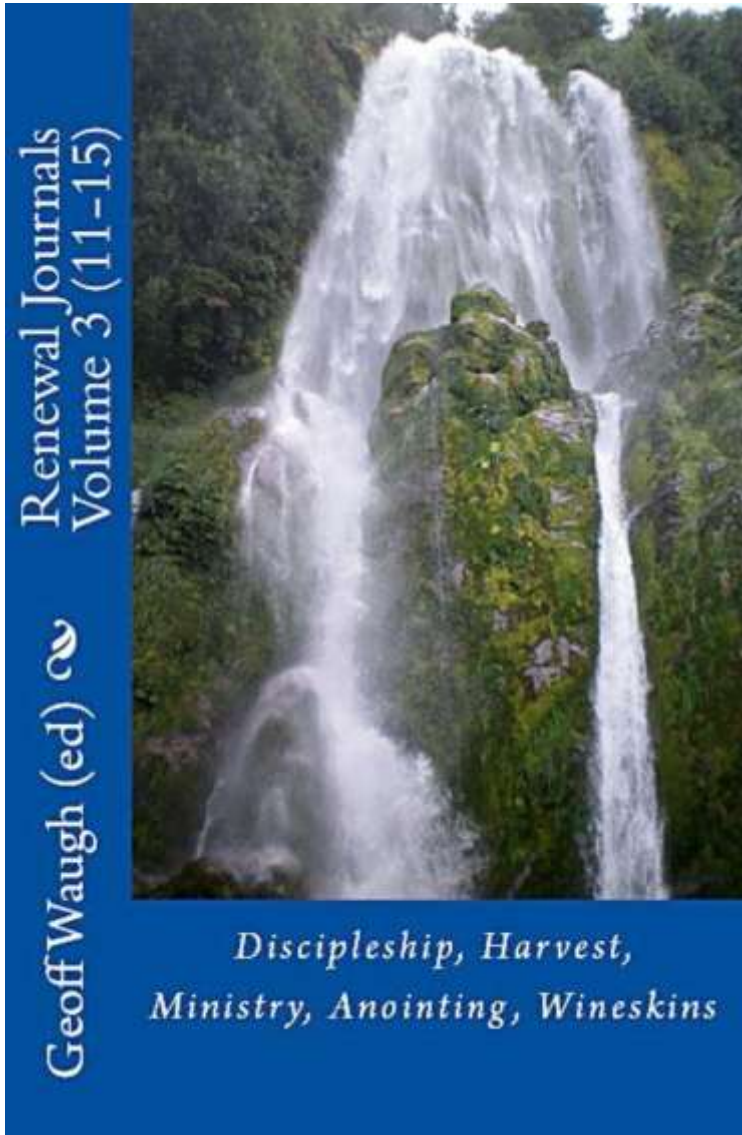
His book is enriched by similar applied theology from others involved in supernatural mission. This includes Leif Hetland on reaching unreached people groups supernaturally, Bill Jackson's survey of the biblical background to powerful mission, Peter Prosser's overview of church history as mission history, Clifton Clarke's examination of Spirit-filled and empowered mission, Roland and Heidi Baker on prophetic and loving anointing for awesome mission, Jonathan Bernis on the messianic mission of the Jews, 'DJ' a missionary in the Arab world on effective mission to Muslims, Bob Ekblad on holistic transformational mission, anthropologist Lesley-Anne Leighton's call for incarnational practice in words and deeds, and Howard Foltz on current developments in mission. You will be informed and inspired. We have added this book to our mission text books in our degree program.

### ***Body Ministry, by Geoff Waugh***

From the Foreword by Rev Prof Dr James Haire:

Dr Waugh's analysis, evaluation and application of the theology of the living Body of Christ inevitably is no less than truly revolutionary, as is his analysis, evaluation and application of the theology of the living Spirit's work.

Dr Waugh has had a long and distinguished mission career, especially in education, in addressing the central Christian issues outlined above. It has been my honour and my privilege to have served alongside him for eight years (1987–1994) in Trinity Theological College, in the Brisbane College of Theology, and in the School of Theology of Griffith University, in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. He has been a dear and valued friend, and especially one who day-by-day in his life has lived out what he taught. Moreover, he has had vast experience in his long teaching ministry, not only in Australia, but throughout the South Pacific, Asia, and in Africa. His work is thus very important reading indeed for us all.



***Renewal Journal Volume (11-15)***  
**Discipleship, Harvest, Ministry,  
Anointing, Wineskins**

*Renewal Journal*  
*17 Unity*



*Geoff Waugh (Editor)*

***Renewal Journal***  
**17 Unity**

## ***Contents***

### ***Renewal Journal 17: Unity***

Editorial: All one in Christ Jesus	103
1 Snapshots of Glory, by George Otis Jr.	107
2 Lessons from Revivals, by Richard Riss	145
3 Spiritual Warfare, by Cecilia Estillole Oliver	155
4 Unity not Uniformity, by Geoff Waugh	163
Reviews	191

**Cover Photo: 17 Unity**

Church and community leaders pray together at baptisms on Pentecost Island, Vanuatu, South Pacific.



## ***Editorial***

### ***All one in Christ Jesus***

The Spirit of the Lord is speaking loudly and clearly to the church now about unity – not uniformity.

Unity is biblical – Jesus demands it. We have no option on that. We are one, and are to demonstrate that oneness by our love for one another. Jesus commanded that on his last night with his disciples before he died (John 14-17).

Uniformity is unbiblical. We are meant to be different – different gifts but the same Spirit, different services but the same Lord, different ministries but the same God (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

We make an awful mistake if we want others to think as we do – because our thinking is too small at the best of times, and always distorted or limited. Another awful mistake is to want others to worship or work in the same way we do. The Spirit gives a great variety of gifts and ministries.

All over the world the Lord is raising up movements of unity across churches. This demands humility, repentance and forgiveness. Ministers are often the last to come on board because they are trained in their own tradition, and may be

critical of other traditions. Often, the people in the congregation are more excited about unity than ministers!

This issue of the *Renewal Journal* celebrates unity, not uniformity. George Otis gives astounding accounts of visible unity among very different churches – different in theology and practice, but one in the Spirit. They demonstrate that to whole cities and regions.

Richard Riss reminds us of key lessons from revivals, where again there has been great unity amid wide diversity.

Donald McGavran, pioneer in church growth writing, broke new ground in the seventies by insisting that churches need to take the power of the Spirit seriously, and expect God to heal – to do what he says he does. It's worth careful consideration. We will never understand life's mysteries, but that's no excuse to run from Scripture. God is God, and wants to do 'exceeding abundantly' above everything we can ask or even think about (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Cecelia Estillore, a medical doctor, tackles head on the mystery of the spiritual dimensions of warfare with practical application in ministry, especially healing and deliverance. I give examples of this from Africa and from South America, adapted from Chapter 4 in my book *Body Ministry*.

Global reports continue to be astounding. No one can keep up with the outpouring of the Spirit in the world today. Evil abounds, but grace abounds so much more – and usually that abounding grace does not make it into the newspapers!

# *1 Snapshots of Glory*

## **Geroge Otis Jr**



George Otis Jr presents vivid stories of the transformation of cities and regions in the two videos Transformations 1 and 2. This article about some of those cities is from Chapter 1 of his book *Informed Intercession*, also reproduced in *Great Revival Stories*.

For some time now, we have been hearing reports of large-scale conversions in places like China, Argentina and Nepal. In many instances, these conversions have been attended by widespread healings, dreams and deliverances. Confronted with these demonstrations of divine power and concern, thousands of men and women have elected to embrace the truth of the gospel. In a growing number of towns and cities, God's house is suddenly the place to be.

In some communities throughout the world, this rapid church growth has also led to dramatic sociopolitical transformation. Depressed economies, high crime rates and corrupt political structures are being replaced by institutional integrity, safe streets

and financial prosperity. Impressed by the handiwork of the Holy Spirit, secular news agencies have begun to trumpet these stories in front-page articles and on prime-time newscasts.

If these transformed communities are not yet common, they are certainly growing in number. At least a dozen case studies have been documented in recent years, and it is likely that others have gone unreported. Of those on file, most are located in Africa and the Americas. The size of these changed communities ranges from about 15,000 inhabitants to nearly 2 million.

Given the extent of these extraordinary stories I have limited my reporting to select highlights. Despite their brevity, these abridged accounts nevertheless offer glorious “snapshots” of the Holy Spirit at work in our day. Readers interested in more details can find them in books like *Commitment to Conquer* (Bob Beekett, Chosen Books, 1997), *The Twilight Labyrinth* (George Otis, Jr., Chosen Books, 1997) and *Praying with Power* (C. Peter Wagner, Regal Books, 1997).

### **Miracle in Mizoram**

One of the earliest and largest transformed communities of the twentieth century is found in Mizoram, a mountainous state in northeastern India. The region’s name translates as “The Land of the Highlanders.” It is an apt description as a majority of the local inhabitants, known as Mizos, live in villages surrounded by timbered mountains and scenic gorges.

The flora is not entirely alpine, however, and it is not uncommon to see hills covered with bamboo, wild bananas and orchids. The Mizos are hearty agriculturists who manage to grow ample crops of rice, corn, tapioca, ginger, mustard, sugar cane, sesame and potatoes.

But it is not farming prowess that sets Mizoram’s 750,000 citizens apart. Nor, for that matter, is it their Mongol stock. Rather it is the astonishing size of the national church, estimated to be between 80 and 95 percent of the current population. This achievement is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that Mizoram is

sandwiched precariously between Islamic Bangladesh to the west, Buddhist Myanmar to the east and south, and the Hindu states of Assam, Manipur and Tripura to the north.

Before the arrival of Christian missionaries in the late nineteenth century, local tribes believed in a spirit called Pathan. They also liked to remove the heads of their enemies. But in just four generations Mizoram has gone from being a fierce head-hunting society to a model community – and quite possibly the most thoroughly Christian place of comparable size on earth. Certainly in India there is no other city or state that could lay claim to having no homeless people, no beggars, no starvation and 100 percent literacy.

The churches of Mizoram currently send 1,000 missionaries to surrounding regions of India and elsewhere throughout the world. Funds for this mission outreach are generated primarily through the sale of rice and firewood donated by the believers. Every time a Mizo woman cooks rice, she places a handful in a special ‘missionary bowl.’ This rice is then taken to the local church, where it is collected and sold at the market.

Even the non-Christian media of India have recognized Christianity as the source of Mizoram’s dramatic social transformation. In 1994 Mizoram celebrated its one-hundredth year of contact with Christianity, which began with the arrival of two missionaries, William Frederick Savage and J. H. Lorraine. On the occasion of this centennial celebration, *The Telegraph* of Calcutta (February 4, 1994) declared:

Christianity’s most reaching influence was the spread of education ... Christianity gave the religious a written language and left a mark on art, music, poetry, and literature. A missionary was also responsible for the abolition of traditional slavery. It would not be too much to say that Christianity was the harbinger of modernity to a Mizo society.

A less quantifiable but no less palpable testimony to the Christian transformation of Mizorarn is the transparent joy and warmth of the Mizo people. Visitors cannot fail to observe “the laughing eyes

mid smiling faces,” in the words of one reporter, on the faces of the children and other residents of Mizoram. And nowhere is this spirit of divine joy more evident than in the churches, where the Mizo’s traditional love of music and dance has been incorporated into worship. The generosity of the people is also seen in their communal efforts to rebuild neighbours’ bamboo huts destroyed by the annual monsoons.

Eighty percent of the population of Mizoram attends church at least once a week. Congregations are so plentiful in Mizoram that, from one vantage point in the city of Izol, it is possible to count 37 churches. Most fellowships have three services on Sunday and another on Wednesday evening (1).

The state of Mizoram is governed by a 40-member assembly that convenes in the capital of Aizawl. Although there are different political parties, all of them agree on the ethical demands of political office in Mizoram. Specifically, all candidates must be:

- persons with a good reputation
- diligent and honest
- clean and uncorrupt
- nondrinkers
- morally and sexually unblemished
- loyal to the law of the land
- fervent workers for the welfare of the people
- loyal to their own church

How many of our political leaders could pass this test? For that matter, how many of our religious leaders could pass?

### **Almolonga, Guatemala**

In the mid-1970s, the town of Almolonga was typical of many Mayan highland communities: idolatrous, inebriated and economically depressed. Burdened by fear and poverty, the people sought support in alcohol and a local idol named Maximon. Determined to fight back, a group of local intercessors got busy, crying out to God during evening prayer vigils. As a consequence of their partnership with the Holy Spirit, Almolonga, like Mizoram, has become one of the most thoroughly transformed communities in

the world. Fully 90 percent of the town's citizens now consider themselves to be evangelical Christians. As they have repudiated ancient pacts with Mayan and syncretistic gods, their economy has begun to blossom. Churches are now the dominant feature of Almolonga's landscape and many public establishments boast of the town's new allegiance.

Almolonga is located in a volcanic valley about 15 minutes is west of the provincial capital of Quetzaltenango (Xela). The town meanders for several kilometres along the main road to the Pacific coast. Tidy agricultural fields extend up the hillsides behind plaster and cement block buildings painted in vivid turquoise, mustard and burnt red. Most have corrugated tin roofs, although a few, waiting for a second story, sprout bare rebar. The town's brightly garbed citizens share the narrow streets with burros, piglets and more than a few stray dogs.

Although many Christian visitors comment on Almolonga's "clean" spiritual atmosphere, this is a relatively recent development. "Just twenty years ago," reports Guatemala City pastor Harold Caballeros, "the town suffered from poverty, violence and ignorance. In the mornings you would encounter many men just lying on the streets, totally drunk from the night before. And of course this drinking brought along other serious problems like domestic violence and poverty. It was a vicious cycle."

Donato Santiago, the town's aging chief of police, told me during an October 1998 interview that he and a dozen deputies patrolled the streets regularly because of escalating violence. "People were always fighting," he said. "We never had any rest." The town, despite its small population, had to build four jails to contain the worst offenders. "They were always full," Santiago remembers. "We often had to bus overflow prisoners to Quetzaltenango." There was disrespect toward women and neglect of the family. Dr. Mell Winger, who has also visited Almolonga on several occasions, talked to children who said their fathers would go out drinking for weeks at a time. "I talked to one woman," Winger recalls, "whose husband would explode if he didn't like the meal. She would often be beaten and kicked out of the home."

Pastor Mariano Riscajché one of the key leaders of Almolonga's spiritual turnaround, has similar memories. "I was raised in misery. My father sometimes drank for forty to fifty consecutive days. We never had a big meal, only a little tortilla with a small glass of coffee. My parents spent what little money they had on alcohol."

In an effort to ease their misery, many townspeople made pacts with local deities like Maximon (a wooden idol rechristened San Simon by Catholic syncretists), and the patron of death, Pascual Bailón. The latter, according to Riscajché, "is a spirit of death whose skeletal image was once housed in a chapel behind the Catholic church. Many people went to him when they wanted to kill someone through witchcraft." The equally potent Maximon controlled people through money and alcohol. "He's not just a wooden mask," Riscajché insists, "but a powerful spiritual strongman." The deities were supported by well-financed priesthoods known as *confradías* (2).

During these dark days the gospel did not fare well. Outside evangelists were commonly chased away with sticks or rocks, while small local house churches were similarly stoned. On one occasion six men shoved a gun barrel down the throat of Mariano Riscajché. As they proceeded to pull the trigger, he silently petitioned the Lord for protection. When the hammer fell, there was no action. A second click. Still no discharge.

In August 1974 Riscajché led a small group of believers into a series of prayer vigils that lasted from 7 P.M. to midnight. Although prayer dominated the meetings, these vanguard intercessors also took time to speak declarations of freedom over the town. Riscajché remembers that God filled them with faith. "We started praying, 'Lord, it's not possible that we could be so insignificant when your Word says we are heads and not tails.'"

In the months that followed, the power of God delivered many men possessed by demons associated with Maximon and Pascual Bailón. Among the more notable of these was a Maximon cult leader named José Albino Tazej. Stripped of their power and customers, the *confradías* of Maximon made a decision to remove the sanctuary of Maximon to the city of Zunil.



At this same time, God was healing many desperately diseased people. Some of these hearings led many to commit their lives to Christ (including that of Madano's sister-in-law Teresa, who was actually raised from the dead after succumbing to complications associated with a botched caesarean section).

This wave of conversions has continued to this day. By late 1998 there were nearly two dozen evangelical churches in this Mayan town of 19,000, and at least three or four of them had more than 1,000 members. Mariano Riscajché's El Calvario Church seats 1,200 and is nearly always packed. Church leaders include several men who, in earlier years, were notorious for stoning believers.

Nor has the move of God in Almolonga been limited to church growth. Take a walk through the town's commercial district and you will encounter ubiquitous evidence of transformed lives and social institutions. On one street you can visit a drug-store called 'The Blessing of the Lord.' On another you can shop at 'The Angels' store. Feeling hungry? Just zip into 'Paradise Chicken,' 'Jireh' bakery or the 'Vineyard of the Lord' beverage kiosk. Need building advice? Check out 'Little Israel Hardware' or 'El Shaddai' metal fabrication. Feet hurt from shopping? Just take them to the 'Jordan' mineral baths for a good soak.



If foreigners find this public display of faith extraordinary, Mariano sees it as perfectly natural. “How can you demonstrate you love God if you don’t show it? Didn’t Paul say, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel?’”

The contents of the stores have also changed. Mell Winger recalls visiting a small *tienda* where the Christian proprietor pointed to a well-stocked food shelf and said, “This was once full of alcohol.” Town bars have not fared any better. Harold Caballeros explains: “Once people stopped spending their money on alcohol they actually bought out several distressed taverns and turned them into churches. This happened over and over again.” One new bar did open during the revival, but it only lasted a couple of months. The owner was converted and now plays in a Christian band.

As the drinking stopped, so did the violence. For 20 years the town’s crime rate has declined steadily. In 1994, the last of Almolonga’s four jails was closed. The remodelled building is now called the ‘Hall of Honour’ and is used for municipal ceremonies and weddings. Leaning against the door, police chief Donato Santiago offered a knowing grin. “It’s pretty uneventful around here,” he said.

Even the town’s agricultural base has come to life. For years, crop yields around Almolonga were diminished through a combination of and land and poor work habits. But as the people have turned to God they have seen a remarkable transformation of their land.

“It is a glorious thing,” exclaims a beaming Caballeros. “Almolonga’s fields have become so fertile they yield three harvests per year.” In fact, some farmers I talked to reported their normal 60-day growing cycle on certain vegetables has been cut to 25. Whereas before they would export four truckloads of produce per month, they are now watching as many as 40 loads a day roll out of the valley.



Nicknamed “America’s Vegetable Garden,” Almolonga’s produce is of biblical proportions. Walking through the local exhibition hall I saw (and filmed) five-pound beets, carrots larger than my arm and cabbages the size of oversized basketballs (3). Noting the dimensions of these vegetables and the town’s astounding 1,000 percent increase in agricultural productivity, university researchers from the United States and other foreign countries have beat a steady path to Almolonga.

“Now,” says Caballeros, “these brothers have the joy of buying big Mercedes trucks -with cash.” And they waste no time in pasting their secret all over the shiny vehicles. Huge metallic stickers and mud flaps read ‘The Gift of God,’ ‘God Is My Stronghold’ and ‘Go Forward in Faith.’

Some farmers are now providing employment to others by renting out land and developing fields in other towns. Along with other Christian leaders they also help new converts get out of debt. It is a gesture that deeply impresses Mell Winger. “I think of Paul’s words to the Thessalonians when he said, “We not only gave you the gospel of God but we gave you our own souls as well.” (4).

Caballeros agrees: “And that’s what these people do. It is a beautiful spectacle to go and see the effect of the gospel, because you can actually see it - and that is what we want for our communities, for our cities and for our nations.”

Despite their success, believers in Almolonga have no intention of letting up. Many fast three times a week and continue to assault the forces of darkness in prayer and evangelism. On Halloween day in 1998, an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 believers gathered in the market square to pray down barriers against the gospel in neighbouring towns and around the world (5). Many, unable to find seats, hung off balconies and crowded concrete staircases. Led by the mayor and various Christian dignitaries, they prayed hand in hand for God to take authority over their lives, their town and any hindering spirits.

How significant are these developments? In a 1994 headline article describing the dramatic events in Almolonga, Guatemala's premier newsmagazine *Cronica Semanal* concluded "the Evangelical Church ... constitutes the most significant force for religious change in the highlands of Guatemala since the Spanish conquest (6).

### **The Umuofai of Nigeria**

The Umuofai kindred are spread out in several villages situated near the town of Umuahia in Abia State in southeastern Nigeria (7). A major rail line links the area with Port Harcourt, about 120 kilometers to the south. Like most parts of coastal Africa, it is distinguished by dense tropical flora and killer humidity.

It is possible, even likely, veteran travellers will not have heard of the Umuofai or their homeland. This is not surprising seeing that the kindred's claim to fame has virtually nothing to do with their size or setting. While their history does claim centuries-old roots, the truly newsworthy events are still tender shoots.

Indeed the interesting chapter of the Umuofai story began as recently as 1996. Two Christian brothers, Emeka and Chinedu Nwankpa, had become increasingly distressed over the spiritual condition of their people. While they did not know everything about the Umuofai kindred, or their immediate Ubakala clan, they knew enough to be concerned. Not only were there few Christians, but there was also an almost organic connection with ancestral traditions of sorcery, divination and spirit appeasement. Some even practiced the demonic art of shape-shifting. Taking the

burden before the Lord, the younger brother, Chinedu Nwankpa, was led into a season of spiritual mapping. After conducting a partial 80-day fast, he learned that his primary assignment (which would take the good part of a year) was to spend one day a week with clan elders investigating the roots of prevailing idolatry - including the role of the ancestors and shrines. He would seek to understand how and when the Ubakala clan entered into animistic bondage. According to older brother Emeka, a practicing lawyer and international Bible teacher, this understanding was critical. When I asked why, Emeka responded, "When a people publicly renounce their ties to false gods and philosophies, they make it exceedingly undesirable for the enemy to remain in their community." (24).

The study was finally completed in late 1996. Taking their findings to prayer, the brothers soon felt prompted to invite kindred leaders and other interested parties to attend a special meeting. "What will be our theme?" they asked. The Master's response was quick and direct. "I want you to speak to them about idolatry."

On the day of the meeting, Emeka and Chinedu arrived unsure of what kind of crowd they would face. Would there be five or fifty? Would the people be open or hostile? What they actually encountered stunned them. The meeting place was not only filled with 300 people, but the audience also included several prominent clan leaders and witch doctors. "After I opened in prayer," Emeka recalls, "this young man preaches for exactly 42 minutes. He brings a clear gospel message. He gives a biblical teaching on idolatry and tells the people exactly what it does to a community. When he has finished, he gives a direct altar call. And do you know what happens? Sixty-one adults respond, including people from lines that, for eight generations, had handled the traditional priesthood.

"Let me give you an idea of what I am talking about. There is a local spirit that is supposed to give fertility to the earth. The people of the community believed this particular spirit favoured farmers who planted yams - an old uncle to the potato. A male from each generation was dedicated to this spirit to insure his blessing. When this priest was ready to die, he had to be taken outside so that the heavenly alignment could be undone. He was buried in the night

with his head covered with a clay pot. Then, a year after the burial, the skull was exhumed and put in the shrine. These skulls and other sacred objects were never allowed to touch the ground. Of course, sacrifices were also made from time to time. This was the way of life in our community for eight generations.”

When the minister finished the altar call, the Nwankpa brothers were startled to see a man coming forward with the sacred skull in his hands. Here in front of them was the symbol and receptacle of the clan’s ancestral power. “By the time the session ended,” Emeka marvels, “eight other spiritual custodians had also come forward. If I had not been there in the flesh, I would not have believed it.”

As Emeka was called forward to pray for these individuals, the Holy Spirit descended on the gathering and all the clan leaders were soundly converted. The new converts were then instructed to divide up into individual family units - most were living near the village of Mgbarrakuma - and enter a time of repentance within the family. This took another hour and twenty minutes. During this time people were under deep conviction, many rolling on the ground, weeping. “I had to persuade some of them to get up,” Emeka recalls.

After leading this corporate repentance, Emeka heard the Lord say, ‘It is now time to renounce the covenants made by and for this community over the last 300 years.’ Following the example of Zechariah 12:10-13:2, the Nwankpas led this second-phase renunciation. “We were just about to get up,” Emeka remembers, “and the Lord spoke to me again. I mean He had it all written out. He said, ‘It is now time to go and deal with the different shrines.’ So I asked the people, ‘Now that we have renounced the old ways, what are these shrines doing here?’ And without a moment’s hesitation they replied, ‘We need to get rid of them!’”

Having publicly renounced the covenants their ancestors had made with the powers of darkness, the entire community proceeded to nine village shrines. The three chief priests came out with their walking sticks. It was tradition that they should go first. Nobody else had the authority to take such a drastic action. So the people stood, the young men following the elders and the women

remaining behind in the village square. Lowering his glasses, Emeka says, "You cannot appreciate how this affected me personally. Try to understand that I am looking at my own chief. I am looking at generations of men that I have known, people who have not spoken to my father for thirty years, people with all kinds of problems. They are now born-again!"

One of these priests, an elder named Odogwu-ogu, stood before the shrine of a particular spirit called Amadi. He was the oldest living representative of the ancestral priesthood. Suddenly he began to talk to the spirits. He said, "Amadi, I want you to listen carefully to what I am saying. You were there in the village square this morning. You heard what happened." He then made an announcement that Emeka will never forget.

Listen, Amadi, the people who own the land have arrived to tell you that they have just made a new covenant with the God of heaven. Therefore all the previous covenants you have made with our ancient fathers are now void. The elders told me to take care of you and I have done that all these years. But today I have left you, and so it is time for you to return to wherever you came from. I have also given my life to Jesus Christ, and from now on, my hands and feet are no longer here (8).

As he does this, he jumps sideways, lifts his hands and shouts, "Hallelujah!"

"With tears in my eyes," Emeka says, reliving the moment, "I stepped up to anoint this shrine and pray. Every token and fetish was taken out. And then we went through eight more shrines, gathering all the sacred objects and piling them high.

"Gathering again back in the square I said, 'Those who have fetishes in your homes, bring them out because God is visiting here today. Don't let Him pass you by.' At this, one of the priests got up and brought out a pot with seven openings. He said to the people, 'There is poison enough to kill everybody here in that little pot. There is a horn of an extinct animal, the bile of a tiger and the venom of a viper mixed together.' He warned the young men, 'Don't touch it. Carry it on a pole because it is usually suspended in the shrine.' This was piled in the square along with all the ancestral

skulls.” Soon other heads of households brought various ritual objects-including idols, totems and fetishes-for public burning. Many of these items had been handed down over ten generations.

Emeka then read a passage from Jeremiah 10 that judges the spirits associated with these artifacts. Reminding the powers that the people had rejected them, he said, “You spirits that did not make the heavens and the earth in the day of your visitation, it is time for you to leave this place.” The people then set the piled objects on fire. They ignited with such speed and intensity that the villagers took it as a sign that God had been waiting for this to happen for many years. When the fire subsided, Emeka and his brother prayed for individual needs and prophetically clothed the priests with new spiritual garments. Altogether the people spent nine hours in intense, strategic-level spiritual warfare.

Emeka recalls that when it was over, “You could feel the atmosphere in the community change. Something beyond revival had broken out.” Two young ministers recently filled the traditional Anglican church with about 4,000 youth. And in the middle of the message, demons were reportedly flying out the door! Having renounced old covenants, the Umuofai kindred have made a collective decision that nobody will ever return to animism. “Today,” Emeka says, “everybody goes to church. There is also a formal Bible study going on, and the women have a prayer team that my mother conducts. Others gather to pray after completing their communal sweeping.” (9).

In terms of political and economic development, good things have begun to happen

but not as dramatically as in Almolonga. Still, there is evidence that God has touched the land here much like He has in the highlands of Guatemala. Shortly after the public repentance, several villagers discovered their plots were permeated with saleable minerals. One of these individuals was Emeka’s own mother, a godly woman whose property has turned up deposits of valuable ceramic clay.



## **Hemet, California**

For years this searing valley in southern California was known as a pastor's graveyard. Riddled with disunity, local churches were either stagnant or in serious decline. In one case, street prostitutes actually transformed a church rooftop into an outdoor bordello. The entire community had, in the words of pastor Bob Beckett, "a kind of a nasty spiritual feeling to it."

When Beckett arrived on the scene in 1974, Hemet had the personality of a sleepy retirement community, a place where people who had served their tour of duty came to live out a life of ease (10). Having achieved most of their goals, people simply wanted to be left alone. Though a fair number attended church, they had no appetite for anything progressive, much less evangelistic. Spiritually lethargic clergy were content to simply go through the motions.

But things were not all they seemed. Underneath the surface of this laid-back community was a spiritual dark side that was anything but lethargic. "We discovered," said Beckett, "that illegal and occult activity was thriving in our community." It was a rude awakening.

The Hemet Valley was fast becoming a cult haven. "We had the Moonies and Mormons. We had the 'Sheep People,' a cult that claimed Christ but dealt in drugs. The Church of Scientology set up a state-of-the-art multimedia studio called Golden Era, and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi purchased a property to teach people how to find enlightenment." The latter, according to Beckett, included a 360-acre juvenile facility where students were given instruction in upper-level transcendental meditation. "We're not talking about simply feeling good; we're talking about techniques whereby people can actually leave their bodies."

These discoveries got Beckett to wondering why the Maharishi would purchase property in this relatively obscure valley and why it would be located in proximity to the Scientologists and the spiritually active Soboba Indian reservation. Sensing something sinister might be lurking beneath the town's glazed exterior, Beckett took out a map and started marking locations where there was identifiable spiritual activity." Noticing these marks were

clustered in a specific area, he began to ask more probing questions. “I began to wonder,” he said, “if there was perhaps a dimension of darkness I had failed to recognize. I didn’t realize it at the time, but I was led into what we now call spiritual mapping.”

The deeper this rookie pastor looked, the less he liked what he was seeing. It seemed the valley, in addition to hosting a nest of cults, was also a notable centre of witchcraft. And unfortunately this was not a new development. Elderly citizens could recollect looking up at the nearby mountains on previous Halloweens and seeing them illumined by dozens of ritual fires. In Hemet and the neighbouring community of Idyllwild, it was not uncommon to find the remains of animal sacrifices long before such matters became part of the public discourse.

Nor were cults the only preexisting problem. Neighborhood youth gangs had plagued the Hemet suburb of San Jacinto for more than a century. When pastor Gordon Houston arrived in 1986 the situation was extremely volatile. His church, San Jacinto Assembly, sits on the very street that has long hosted the town’s notorious First Street Gang. “These were kids whose dads and grandfathers had preceded them in the gang. The lifestyle had been handed down through the generations.”

The danger was so great around the main gang turf that the police refused to go there without substantial backup. “One time I was walking out in front of my church,” Gordon recalls. “Three First Street guys came up behind me, while four others closed in from across the street. They moved me to the centre of the street and asked, “Who are you and what are you doing here?” It was a scary scenario.

“We were one of the first school districts that had to implement a school dress code to avoid gang attire. It was a big problem. There were a lot of weapons on campus and kids were being attacked regularly. The gangs were tied into one of the largest drug production centres in Riverside County.”

It turns out the sleepy Hemet Valley was also the methamphetamine manufacturing capital of the West Coast. One

former cooker I spoke to in June 1998 (we'll call him Sonny) told me the area hosted at least nine major production laboratories. The dry climate, remote location and 'friendly' law enforcement combined to make it an ideal setup. "It was quite amazing," Sonny told me. "I actually had law officers transport dope for me in their police cruisers. That's the way it used to be here."

Sonny cooked methamphetamine in Hemet from 1983 to 1991. His minimum quota was 13 pounds every two weeks - an amount capable of supplying more than a quarter of a million people. And there were times when he and his colleagues doubled this production. Most of the deliveries went to Southern California, Arizona or Utah. Often the deadly powder was trucked out of town disguised as 4x8-foot forms of Sheetrock. "It was fascinating to see it done," Sonny remembered. "Even the paper backing was torn off afterward and sold to people in prison."

The spiritual turnaround for Hemet did not come easily. Neither the Beckerts nor the Houstons were early Valley enthusiasts. "I just didn't want to be there," Bob recalls with emphasis. "For the first several years, my wife and I had our emotional bags packed all the time. We couldn't wait for the day that God would call us out of this valley."

The Houstons didn't unpack their bags to begin with. When the San Jacinto position first opened up in 1984, they drove into town in the middle of summer. Gordon remembers it being scorching hot that day. "We had our six-month-old baby in a Pinto Runabout with vinyl seats and no air-conditioning. We drove down the street, took one look at the church and said, "No thank you." We didn't even stop to put in a resumé."

It would be three years before the Houstons were persuaded to return to the Hemet Valley. "Even then," Gordon says, "we saw it as a chance to gain some experience, build a good resumé, and then look for other opportunities. God, of course, had something else in mind. I remember him saying, "I have a plan, and I'll share it with you - if you will make a commitment to this place." And I'll be honest with you. It was still a tough choice."

For a while, Bob Beckett's spiritual mapping had provided certain stimulation. Then, it too reached a dead end. "The flow of information just seemed to dry up," he remembers. "That was when God asked if we would be willing to spend the rest of our lives in this valley. He couldn't have asked a worse question. How could I spend the rest of my life in a place I didn't love, didn't care for and didn't want to be a part of?"

Yet God persevered and the Becketts eventually surrendered to His will. "As soon as we did this," Bob reports, "the flow of information opened back up. In retrospect I see that God would not allow us to go on learning about the community's spiritual roots unless we were committed to act on our understanding. I now realize it was our commitment to the valley that allowed the Lord to trust us with the information (12).

"Once we made this pact, Susan and I fell in love with the community. It might sound a little melodramatic, but I actually went out and purchased a cemetery plot. I said, "Unless Jesus comes back, this is my land. I'm starting and ending my commitment right here." Well, God saw that and began to dispense powerful revelation. I still had my research, but it was no longer just information. It was information that was important to me. It was information I had purchased; it belonged to me."

One new area of understanding concerned a prayer meeting Bob had called 15 years prior. Unable to interpret his spiritual site map or a recurring dream that depicted a bear hide stretched over the valley, he had asked 12 men to join him in prayer at a mountain cabin in nearby Idyllwild. Around two o'clock in the morning the group experienced a dramatic breakthrough - just not the one they were expecting. Rather than yielding fresh insight into the site map or bear hide, the action stimulated a new spiritual hunger within the community.

Now that the Becketts had covenanted to stay in the community, God started to fill in the gaps of their understanding. He began by leading Bob to a book containing an accurate history of the San Jacinto mountains that border Hemet and of the Cahuilla Nation that are descendants of the region's original inhabitants. "As I read

through this book I discovered the native peoples believed the ruling spirit of the region was called Tahquitz. He was thought to be exceedingly powerful, occasionally malevolent, associated with the great bear, and headquartered in the mountains. Putting the book down, I sensed the Lord saying, "Find Tahquitz on your map!"

"When I did so, I was shocked to find that our prayer meeting 15 years earlier was held in a cabin located at the base of a one-thousand-foot solid rock spire called Tahquitz peak! I also began to understand that the bear hide God had showed me was linked to the spirit of Tahquitz. The fact that it was stretched out over the community was a reminder of the control this centuries - old demonic strongman wielded, a control that was fuelled then, and now, by the choices of local inhabitants. At that point I knew God had been leading us."

Bob explained that community intercessors began using spiritual mapping to focus on issues and select meaningful targets. Seeing the challenge helped them become spiritually and mentally engaged. With real targets and timelines they could actually watch the answers to their prayers. They learned that enhanced vision escalates fervour.

When I asked him to compare the situation in Hemet today with the way things used to be, he did not take long to answer. "We are not a perfect community," he said, "but we never will be until the Perfect One comes back. What I can tell you is that the Hemet Valley has changed dramatically."

The facts speak for themselves. Cult membership, once a serious threat, has now sunk to less than 0.3 percent of the population. The Scientologists have yet to be evicted from their perch at the edge of town, but many other groups are long gone. The transcendental meditation training centre was literally burned out. Shortly after praying for their removal, a brushfire started in the mountains on the west side of the valley. It burned along the top of the ridge and then arced down like a finger to incinerate the Maharishi's facility. Leaving adjacent properties unsinged, the flames burned back up the mountain and were eventually extinguished.

The drug business, according to Sonny, has dropped by as much as 75 percent. Gone, too, is the official corruption that was once its fellow traveller. “There was a time when you could walk into any police department around here and look at your files or secure an escort for your drug shipment. The people watching your back were wearing badges. Man, has that changed. If you’re breaking the law today, the police are out to get ya. And prayer is the biggest reason. The Christians out here took a multimillion-dollar drug operation and made it run off with its tail between its legs.”

Gangs are another success story. Not long ago a leader of the First Street Gang burst down the centre aisle of Gordon Houston’s church (San Jacinto Assembly) during the morning worship service. “I’m in the middle of my message,” Gordon laughs, “and here comes this guy, all tattooed up, heading right for the platform. I had no idea what he was thinking. When he gets to the front, he looks up and says, “I want to get saved right now!” This incident, and this young man, represented the first fruit of what God would do in the gang community. Over the next several weeks, the entire First Street family came to the Lord. After this, word circulated that our church was off limits. ‘You don’t tag this church with graffiti; you don’t mess with it in any way.’ Instead, gang members began raking our leaves and repainting walls that had been vandalized.” More recently, residents of the violent gang house across from San Jacinto Assembly moved out. Then, as church members watched, they bulldozed the notorious facility.

Nor are gang members the only people getting saved in Hemet Valley. A recent survey revealed that Sunday morning church attendance now stands at about 14 percent - double what it was just a decade ago. During one 18-month stretch, San Jacinto Assembly altar workers saw more than 600 people give their hearts to Christ. Another prayer-oriented church has grown 300 percent in twelve months.

The individual stories are stirring. Sonny, the former drug manufacturer, was apprehended by the Holy Spirit en route to a murder. Driving to meet his intended victim he felt something take control of the steering wheel. He wound up in the parking lot of Bob Beckett’s Dwelling Place Church. It was about 8 o’clock in the

morning and a men's meeting had just gotten underway. "Before I got out of the car," Sonny says ruefully, "I looked at the silenced pistol laying on the seat. I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, what am I doing.' So I covered it with a blanket and walked into this prayer meeting. As soon as I did that, it was all over. People are praying around me and I hear this man speak out: 'Somebody was about to murder someone today.' Man, my eyeballs just about popped out of my head. But that was the beginning of my journey home. It took a long time, but I've never experienced more joy in my life."

As of the late 1990s, Hemet also boasted a professing mayor, police chief, fire chief and city manager. If this were not impressive enough, Beckett reckons that one could add about 30 percent of the local law enforcement officers and an exceptional number of high school teachers, coaches and principals. In fact, for the past several years nearly 85 percent of all school district staff candidates have been Christians.

The result, says Gordon, is that "Our school district, after being the laughing stock of Southern California, now has one of the lowest drop-out rates in the nation. In just four years we went from a 4.7 drop-out rate to 0.07. Only the hand of God can do that."

And what of the Valley's infamous church infighting? "Now we are a wall of living stones," Beckett declares proudly. "Instead of competing, we are swapping pulpits. You have Baptists in Pentecostal pulpits and vice versa. You have Lutherans with Episcopalians. The Christian community has become a fabric instead of loose yarn."

Houston adds that valley churches are also brought together by quarterly concerts of prayer and citywide prayer revivals where speaking assignments are rotated among area pastors. "Different worship teams lead songs and salvation cards are distributed equally among us. It is a cooperative vision. We are trying to get pastors to understand there is no church big enough, gifted enough, talented enough, anointed enough, financially secure enough, equipped enough, to take a city all by itself. Yes, God will hold me accountable for how I treated my church. But I am also going to be

held accountable for how I pastored my city.”

One fellowship is so committed to raising the profile of Jesus Christ in the valley that they have pledged into another church’s building program. To Bob Beckett it all makes sense. “It’s about building people, not building a church. In fact, it is not even a church growth issue, it is a kingdom growth issue. It’s about seeing our communities transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

### **Cali, Columbia**

For years Colombia has been the world’s biggest exporter of cocaine, sending between 700 hundred and 1,000 tons a year to the United States and Europe alone (13). The Cali cartel, which controlled up to 70 percent of this trade, has been called the largest, richest and most well-organized criminal organization in history (14). Employing a combination of bribery and threats, it wielded a malignant power that corrupted individuals and institutions alike (5).



Randy and Marcy MacMillan, co-pastors of the Comunidad Christiana de Fe, have labored in Cali for more than 20 years. At least 10 of these have been spent in the shadow of the city’s infamous drug lords.

Marcy inherited the family home of her late father, a former Colombian diplomat. When illicit drug money began pouring into Cali in the 1980s, the Cocaine lords moved into the MacMillan’s upscale neighbourhood, buying up entire blocks of luxurious haciendas. They modified these properties by installing elaborate underground tunnel systems and huge 30-foot (10-metre) walls to



shield them from prying eyes-and stray bullets. Video cameras encased in Plexiglas bubbles scanned the surrounding area continuously. There were also regular patrols with guard dogs.

“These people were paranoid,” Randy recalls. “They were exporting 500 million dollars worth of cocaine a month, and it led to constant worries about sabotage and betrayal. They had a lot to lose.”

For this reason, the cartel haciendas were appointed like small cities. Within their walls it was possible to find everything from airstrips and helicopter landing pads to indoor bowling alleys and miniature soccer stadiums. Many also contained an array of gift boutiques, nightclubs and restaurants.

Whenever the compound gates swung open, it was to disgorge convoys of shiny black Mercedes automobiles. As they snaked their way through the city’s congested streets, all other traffic would pull to the side of the road. Drivers who defied this etiquette did so at their own risk. Many were blocked and summarily shot. As many as 15 people a day were killed in such a manner. “You didn’t want to be at the same stoplight with them,” Randy summarized.

Having once been blocked in his own neighbourhood, Randy remembers the terror. “They drew their weapons and demanded to see our documents. I watched them type the information into a portable computer. Thankfully the only thing we lost was some film. I will always remember the death in their eyes. These are people that kill for a living and like it.”

Rosevelt Muriel, director of the city’s ministerial alliance, also remembers those days. “It was terrible. If you were riding around in a car and there was a confrontation, you were lucky to escape with your life. I personally saw five people killed in Cali.”

Journalists had a particularly difficult time. They were either reporting on human carnage – car bombs were going off like popcorn - or they were becoming targets themselves. Television news anchor Adriana Vivas said that many journalists were killed for denouncing what the Mafia was doing in Colombia and Cali. “Important political decisions were being manipulated by drug

money. It touched everything, absolutely everything.”

By the early 1990s, Cali had become one of the most thoroughly corrupt cities in the world. Cartel interests controlled virtually every major institution - including banks, businesses, politicians and law enforcement.

Like everything else in Cali, the church was in disarray. Evangelicals were few and did not much care for each other. “In those days,” Roosevelt Muriel recalls sadly, “the pastors’ association consisted of an old box of files that nobody wanted. Every pastor was working on his own; no one wanted to join together.”

When pastor-evangelists Julio and Ruth Ruibal came to Cali in 1978, they were dismayed at the pervasive darkness in the city. “There was no unity between the churches,” Ruth explained. Even Julio was put off by his colleagues and pulled out of the already weak ministerial association.

Ruth relates that during a season of fasting the Lord spoke to Julio saying, “You don’t have the right to be offended. You need to forgive.” So going back to the pastors, one by one, Julio made things right. They could not afford to walk in disunity - not when their city faced such overwhelming challenges.

Randy and Marcy MacMillan were among the first to join the Ruibals in intercession. “We just asked the Lord to show us how to pray,” Marcy remembers. And He did. For the next several months they focused on the meagre appetite within the church for prayer, unity and holiness. Realizing these are the very things that attract the presence of God, they petitioned the Lord to stimulate a renewed spiritual hunger, especially in the city’s ministers.

As their prayers began to take effect, a small group of pastors proposed assembling their congregations for an evening of joint worship and prayer. The idea was to lease the city’s civic auditorium, the Colisco El Pueblo, and spend the night in prayer and repentance. They would solicit God’s active participation in their stand against the drug cartels and their unseen spiritual masters.

Roping off most of the seating area, the pastors planned for a few thousand people. And even this, in the minds of many, was overly optimistic. “We heard it all,” said Rosevelt Muriel. “People told us, ‘It can’t be done,’ ‘No one will come,’ ‘Pastors won’t give their support.’ But we decided to move forward and trust God with the results.”

When the event was finally held in May 1995, the nay-sayers and even some of the organizers were dumbfounded. Instead of the expected modest turnout, more than 25,000 people filed into the civic auditorium - nearly half of the city’s evangelical population at the time! At one point, Muriel remembers, “The mayor mounted the platform and proclaimed, ‘Cali belongs to Jesus Christ.’ Well, when we heard those words, we were energized.” Giving themselves to intense prayer, the crowd remained until 6 o’clock the next morning. The city’s famous all-night prayer vigil - the ‘vigilia’ - had been born.

Forty-eight hours after the event, the daily newspaper, *El Pais*, headlined, “No Homicides!” For the first time in as long as anybody in the city could remember, a 24-hour period had passed without a single person being killed. In a nation cursed with the highest homicide rate in the world, this was a newsworthy development. Corruption also took a major hit when, over the next four months, 900 cartel-linked officers were fired from the metropolitan police force (16).

“When we saw these things happening,” Randy MacMillan exulted, “we had a strong sense that the powers of darkness were headed for a significant defeat.”

In the month of June, this sense of anticipation was heightened when several intercessors reported dreams in which angelic forces apprehended leaders of the Cali drug cartel. Many interpreted this as a prophetic sign that the Holy Spirit was about to respond to the most urgent aspect of the church’s united appeal.<sup>17</sup> Intercessors were praying, and heaven was listening. The seemingly invincible drug lords were about to meet their match.

“Within six weeks of this vision,” MacMillan recalls, “the Colombian

government declared all-out war against the drug lords.” Sweeping military operations were launched against cartel assets in several parts of the country. The 6,500 elite commandos dispatched to Cali (18) arrived with explicit orders to round up seven individuals suspected as the top leaders of the cartel.

“Cali was buzzing with helicopters,” Randy remembers. “The airport was closed and there were police roadblocks at every entry point into the city. You couldn’t go anywhere without proving who you were” (19).

Suspicious that the drug lords were consulting spirit mediums were confirmed when the federalés dragnet picked up Jorge Eliecer Rodriguez at the fortune-telling parlour of Madame Marlene Ballesteros, the famous ‘Pythoness of Cali’ (20). By August, only three months after God’s word to the intercessors, Colombian authorities had captured all seven targeted cartel leaders - Juan Carlos Arminez, Phanor Arizabalata, Julian Murcillo, Henry Loaiza, Jose Santacruz Londono and founders Gilberto and Miguel Roddquez.

Clearly stung by these assaults on his power base, the enemy lashed out against the city’s intercessors. At the top of his hit list was Pastor Julio Ceasar Ruibal, a man whose disciplined fasting and unwavering faith was seriously eroding his manoeuvring room.

On December 13, 1995, Julio rode into the city with his daughter Sarah and a driver. Late for a pastors’ meeting at the Presbyterian Church, he motioned to his driver to pull over. “He told us to drop him off,” Sarah recounts, “and that was the last time I saw him.”

Outside the church, a hit man was waiting in ambush. Drawing a concealed handgun, the assassin pumped two bullets into Julio’s brain at point-blank range.

“I was waiting for him to arrive at the meeting,” Roosevelt remembers. “At two o’clock in the afternoon I received a phone call. The man said, ‘They just killed Julio.’ I said, ‘What? How can they kill a pastor?’ I rushed over, thinking that perhaps he had just been hurt. But when I arrived on the scene, he was motionless. Julio, the

noisy one, the active one, the man who just never sat still, was just lying there like a baby.”

“The first thing I saw was a pool of crimson blood,” Ruth recalls. “And the verse that came to me was Psalm 116:15: ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.’ Sitting down next to Julio’s body, I knew I was on holy ground.

“I had to decide how I was going to deal with this circumstance. One option was to respond in bitterness, not only toward the man that had done this terrible thing, but also toward God. He had, after all, allowed the early removal of my husband, my daughters’ father and my church’s pastor. Julio would never see his vision for the city fulfilled. My other choice was to yield to the redemptive purposes of the Holy Spirit, to give Him a chance to bring something lasting and wonderful out of the situation. Looking down at Julio I just said, ‘Lord, I don’t understand Your plan, but it is well with my soul.’”

Julio Ruibal was killed on the sixth day of a fast aimed at strengthening the unity of Cali’s fledgling church. He knew that even though progress had been made in this area, it had not gone far enough. He knew that unity is a fragile thing. What he could not have guessed is that the fruit of his fast would be made manifest at his own funeral.

In shock, and struggling to understand God’s purposes in this tragedy, 1,500 people gathered at Julio’s funeral. They included many pastors that had not spoken to each other in months. When the memorial concluded these men drew aside and said, “Brothers, let us covenant to walk in unity from this day forward. Let Julio’s blood be the glue that binds us together in the Holy Spirit.”

It worked! Today this covenant of unity has been signed by some 200 pastors and serves as the backbone of the city’s high profile prayer vigils. With Julio’s example in their hearts, they have subordinated their own agendas to a larger, common vision for the city.

Emboldened by their spiritual momentum, Cali’s church leaders

now hold all-night prayer rallies every 90 days. Enthusiasm is so high that these glorious events have been moved to the largest venue in the city, the 55,000-seat Pascual Guerrero soccer stadium (21). Happily (or unhappily as the case may be), the demand for seats continues to exceed supply.

In 1996 God led many churches to join in a collective spiritual mapping campaign. To gain God's perspective on their city, they began to gather intelligence on specific political, social and spiritual strongholds in each of Cali's 22 administrative zones (a scene reminiscent of the 41 Hebrew clans that once rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem). The results, stitched together like panels on a patchwork quilt, gave the church an unprecedented picture of the powers working in the city. "With this knowledge," Randy explained, "our unified intercession became focused. As we prayed in specific terms, we began to see a dramatic loosening of the enemy's stranglehold on our neighbourhoods.

"A few weeks later we used our spiritual mapping intelligence to direct large prayer caravans throughout Cali. Most of the 250 cars established a prayer perimeter around the city, but a few paraded by government offices or the mansions of prominent cartel leaders. My own church focused on the headquarters of the billionaire drug lord, José Santacruz Londono, who had escaped from Bogota's La Picota prison in January (22). His hacienda was located just four blocks from my home. The next day we heard that he had been killed in a gun fight with national police in Medellin!" (23).

In partnership with the Holy Spirit, Cali's Christians had taken effective control of the city. What made the partnership work are the same things that always attract the presence of the Lord: sanctified hearts, right relationships and fervent intercession. "God began changing the city," according to Ruth Ruibal, "because His people finally came together in prayer" (24).

As the kingdom of God descended upon Cali, a new openness to the gospel could be felt at all levels of society - including the educated and wealthy. One man, Gustavo Jaramillo, a wealthy businessman and former mayor, told me, "It is easy to speak to upper-class people about Jesus. They are respectful and

interested.” Raul Grajales, another successful Cali businessman, adds that the gospel is now seen as practical rather than religious. As a consequence, he says, “Many high-level people have come to the feet of Jesus.”

During my April 1998 visit to Cali, I had the privilege of meeting several prominent converts, including Mario Jinete, a prominent attorney, media personality and motivational speaker. After searching for truth in Freemasonry and various New Age systems, he has finally come home to Christ. Five minutes into our interview Jinete broke down. His body shaking, this brilliant lawyer who had courageously faced down some of the most dangerous and corrupt figures in Latin America sobbed loudly. “I’ve lost forty years of my life,” he cried into a handkerchief. “My desire now is to subordinate my ego, to find my way through the Word of God. I want to yield to Christ’s plan for me. I want to serve Him.”

Explosive church growth is one of the visible consequences of the open heavens over Cali. Ask pastors to define their strategy and they respond, “We don’t have time to plan. We’re too busy pulling the nets into the boat.” And the numbers are expanding. In early 1998, I visited one fellowship, the Christian Centre of Love and Faith, where attendance has risen to nearly 35,000. What is more, their stratospheric growth rate is being fuelled entirely by new converts. Despite the facility’s cavernous size (it’s a former Costco warehouse), they are still forced to hold seven Sunday services. As I watched the huge sanctuary fill up, I blurted the standard Western question: “What is your secret?” Without hesitating, a church staff member pointed to a 24-hour prayer room immediately behind the platform. “That’s our secret,” he replied.

Many of Cali’s other churches are also experiencing robust growth, and denominational affiliation and location have little to do with it. The fishing is good for everybody and it’s good all over town. My driver, Carlos Reynoso (not his real name), himself a former drug dealer, put it this way: “There is a hunger for God everywhere. You can see it on the buses, on the streets and in the cafes. Anywhere you go people are ready to talk.” Even casual street evangelists are reporting multiple daily conversions - nearly all the result of arbitrary encounters.

Although danger still lurks in this city of 1.9 million, God is now viewed as a viable protector. When Cali police deactivated a large, 174-kilo car bomb in the populous San Nicolis area in November 1996, many noted that the incident came just 24 hours after 55,000 Christians held their third *vigilia*. Even *El Pais* headlined: “Thanks to God, It Didn’t Explode” (25).

Cali’s prayer warriors were gratified, but far from finished. The following month church officials, disturbed by the growing debauchery associated with the city’s *Feria*, a year-end festival accompanied by 10 days of bull fighting and blowout partying, developed plans to hold public worship and evangelism rallies.

“When we approached the city about this,” Marcy recalls, “God gave us great favour. The city secretary not only granted us rent-free use of the 22,000-scat velodrome (cycling arena), but he also threw in free advertising, security and sound support. We were stunned!” The only thing the authorities required was that the churches pray for the mayor, the city and the citizens.

Once underway, the street witnessing and rallies brought in a bounty of souls. But an even bigger surprise came during the final service which, according to Marcy, emphasized the Holy Spirit “reigning over” and “raining down upon” the city of Cali. As the crowd sang, it began to sprinkle outside, an exceedingly rare occurrence in the month of December. “Within moments,” Marcy recalls, “the city was inundated by torrential tropical rain. It didn’t let up for 24 hours; and for the first time in recent memory, *Feria* events had to be cancelled!”

On the evening of April 9, 1998, I had the distinct privilege of attending a citywide prayer vigil in Cali’s Pascual Guerrero stadium. It was no small event, even in the eyes of the secular media. For days leading up to the *vigilia*, local newspapers had been filled with stories linking it to the profound changes that had settled over the community. Evening newscasters looked straight into the camera and urged viewers, whatever their faith, to attend the all-night event.

Arriving at the stadium 90 minutes early, I found it was already a



full house. I could feel my hair stand on end as I walked onto the infield to tape a report for CBN News. In the stands, 50,000 exuberant worshipers stood ready to catch the Holy Spirit's fire. An additional 15,000 'latecomers' were turned away at the coliseum gate. Undaunted, they formed an impromptu praise march that circled the stadium for hours.

Worship teams from various churches were stationed at 15-metre intervals around the running track. Dancers dressed in beautiful white and purple outfits interpreted the music with graceful motions accentuated by banners, tambourines and sleeve streamers. Both they and their city had been delivered of a great burden. In such circumstances one does not celebrate like a Presbyterian, a Baptist or a Pentecostal; one celebrates like a person who has been liberated!

Judging from the energy circulating in the stands, I was sure the celebrants had no intention of selling their emancipation short. They were not here to cheer a championship soccer team or to absorb the wit and wisdom of a big-name Christian speaker. Their sole objective on this particular evening was to offer up heartfelt worship and ask God to continue the marvellous work He had been undertaking in their city for 36 consecutive months.

"What you're seeing tonight in this stadium is a miracle," declared visiting Bogota pastor Colin Crawford. "A few years ago it would have been impossible for Evangelicals to gather like this." Indeed, this city that has long carried a reputation as an exporter of death is now looked upon as a model of community transformation. It has moved into the business of exporting hope.

High up in the stadium press booth somebody grabbed my arm. Nodding in the direction of a casually dressed man at the broadcast counter he whispered, "That man is the most famous sports announcer in Columbia. He does all the big soccer championships." Securing a quick introduction, I learned that Rafael Araújo Gámez is also a newborn Christian. As he looked out over the fervent crowd, I asked if he had ever seen anything comparable in this stadium. Like Mario, he began to weep. "Never," he said with a trembling chin. "Not ever."

At 2:30 in the morning my cameraman and I headed for the stadium tunnel to catch a ride to the airport. It was a tentative departure. At the front gate crowds still trying to get in looked at us like we were crazy. I could almost read their minds. *Where are you going? Why are you leaving the presence of God?* They were tough questions to answer.

As we prepared to enter our vehicle a roar rose up from the stadium. Listening closely, we could hear the people chanting, in English, *"Lift Jesus up, lift Jesus up."* The words seemed to echo across the entire city. I had to pinch myself. Wasn't it just 36 months ago that people were calling this place a violent, corrupt hell-hole? A city whose ministerial alliance consisted of a box of files that nobody wanted?

In late 1998, Cali's mayor and city council approached the ministerial alliance, with an offer to manage a citywide campaign to strengthen the family. The offer, which has subsequently been accepted, gives the Christians full operational freedom and no financial obligation. The government has agreed to open the soccer stadium, sports arena and velodrome to any seminar or prayer event that will minister to broken families.

## **Global Phenomenon**

As remarkable as the preceding accounts are, they represent but a fraction of the case studies that could be presented. Several others are worth mentioning in brief.

### **Kiambu, Kenya**

Topping this list is Kiambu, Kenya, one-time ministry graveyard located 14 kilometres northwest of Nairobi. In the late 1980s, after years of profligate alcohol abuse, untamed violence and grinding poverty, the Spirit of the Lord was summoned to Kiambu by a handful of intercessors operating out of a grocery store basement known as the "Kiambu Prayer Cave."

According to Kenyan pastor Thomas Muthee, the real breakthrough came when believers won a high profile power encounter with a

local witch named Mama Jane. Whereas people used to be afraid to go out at night, they now enjoy one of the lowest crime rates in the country. Rape and murder are virtually unheard of. The economy has also started to grow. And new buildings are sprouting up all over town.

In February, 1999, pastor Muthee celebrated their ninth anniversary in Kiambu. Through research and spiritual warfare, they have seen their church grow to 5,000 members - a remarkable development in a city that had never before seen a congregation of more than 90 people. And other community fellowships are growing as well. "There is no doubt," Thomas declares, "that prayer broke the power of witchcraft over this city. Everyone in the community now has a high respect for us. They know that God's power chased Mama Jane from town" (26).

### **Vitória da Conquiste, Brazil**

The city of Vitória da Conquiste (Victory of the Conquest) in Brazil's Bahia state, has likewise, experienced a powerful move of God since the mid 1990s. As with other transformed communities, the recovery is largely from extreme poverty, violence and corruption.

Vitória da Conquiste was also a place where pastors spent more pulpit time demeaning their ministerial colleagues than preaching the Word. Desperate to see a breakthrough, local intercessors went to prayer. Within a matter of weeks conviction fell upon the church leaders. In late 1996 they gathered to wash one another's feet in a spirit of repentance. When they approached the community's senior pastor - a man who had been among the most critical - he refused to allow his colleagues to wash his feet. Saying he was not worthy of such treatment, he instead lay prostrate on the ground and invited the others to place the soles of their shoes on his body while he begged their forgiveness. Today the pastors of Vitória da Conquiste are united in their desire for a full visitation of the Holy Spirit (27).

In addition to lifting long-standing spiritual oppression over the city, this action has also led to substantial church growth. Many congregations have recently gone to multiple services.

Furthermore, voters in 1997 elected the son of evangelical parents to serve as mayor. Crime has dropped precipitously, and the economy has rebounded on the strength of record coffee exports and significant investments by the Northeast Bank.

### **San Nicolás, Argentina**

Ed Silvoso of Harvest Evangelism International reports similar developments in San Nicolás, Argentina, an economically depressed community that for years saw churches split and pastors die in tragic circumstances. According to Silvoso, this dark mantle came in with a local shrine to the Queen of Heaven that annually attracts 1.5 million pilgrims.

More recently, pastors have repented for the sin of the church and launched prayer walks throughout the community. They have spoken peace over every home, school, business and police station and concentrated intercession over 10 “dark spots” associated with witchcraft, gangs, prostitution and drug addiction. The pastors have also made appointments with leading political, media and religious (Catholic) officials to repent for neglecting and sometimes cursing them.

As a result of these actions the Catholic bishop is preaching Christ and coming to pastors’ prayer meetings. The mayor has created a space for pastors to pray in city hall. The local newspaper has printed Christian literature. The radio station has begun to refer call-in problems to a pastoral chaplaincy service. The TV station invites pastors onto live talk shows to pray for the people. In short, the whole climate in San Nicolás has changed.

### **Villages, cities, countries**

In other parts of the world God has been at work in *villages* (Navapur, India; Serawak, Malaysia [Selakau people]; and the North American Arctic) in *urban neighbourhoods* (Guatemala City; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Resistencia, Argentina; Guayaquil, Ecuador) and even in *countries* (Uganda). The United States has witnessed God’s special touch in places as far-flung as New York City (Times Square); Modesto, California; and Pensacola, Florida.

Early in my ministry I never thought of investigating transformed communities. I was too preoccupied with other things. In recent days, however, I have become persuaded that something extraordinary is unfolding across the earth. It is, I have come to realize, an expression of the full measure of the kingdom of God. Finding examples of this phenomenon has become my life. And the journey has taken me to the furthest corners of the earth.

## Notes

1. Most of the churches are either Baptist or Presbyterian. But there are also Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvationist and Pentecostal congregations.
2. Although these confradías are no longer welcome in Almolonga, they can still be found in the nearby communities of Zunil and Olintepeque.
3. Almolonga's fields also grow cauliflower, broccoli, radishes, tomatoes, squash, asparagus, leeks and watercress. Their flower market sells gorgeous asters, chrysanthemums and estaditas.
4. See 1 Thessalonians 2:8, KJV.
5. Crowd estimates were provided by Mariano Riscajché based on 10,000 plus seats, rotating local believers and the capacity of adjacent buildings. The event was also carried on local cable television.
6. Mario Roberto Morales, "La Quiebra de Maximon," *Cronica Semanal*, June 24-30, 1994, pp. 17,19,20. (In English the headline reads "The Defeat of Maximon.")
7. In African social hierarchy, kindreds are situated between nuclear families and tribes. They can often be spread out in several towns or villages.
8. This is a local expression that means 'I have pulled myself out of your clutches.'
9. George Otis Jr., *The Twilight Labyrinth* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1997), p. 284.
10. Television personality Art Linkletter made the area famous by proposing it as a mobile home centre.
11. This action was taken around 1976.
12. Bob believes that community pastors need to be willing to make an open-ended commitment that only God can close.
13. This is based on estimates developed by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Colombia is also a major producer of

marijuana and heroin. See 'Colombia Police Raid Farm, Seize 8 Tons of Pure Cocaine,' *Seattle Times*, October 16, 1994, n.p.

14. This statement is attributable to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. See also Pollard, Peter. 'Colombia,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* [database online]. Book of the Year: World Affairs, 1995 [cited March 11, 1997]. Available from [www.eb.com](http://www.eb.com)'.

15. To keep tabs on their operations, cartel founders Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela installed no fewer than 37 phone lines in their palatial home.

16. Documenting the dimensions of Colombia's national savagery, Bogota's leading newspaper, *El Tiempo*, cited 15,000 murders during the first six months of 1993. This gave Colombia, with a population of 32 million people, the dubious distinction of having the highest homicide rate in the World. See Tom Boswell, 'Between Many Fires,' *Christian Century*, Vol. III, No. 18, June 1-8, 1994, p. 560.

17. Two years earlier, as a Christmas 'gift,' the Rodriguez brothers had provided the Cali police with 120 motorcycles and vans.

18. Otis, Jr., *The Twilight Labyrinth*, p. 300.

19. *Ibid.* This unique group was comprised of Colombian police, army personnel and contra guerrillas. Note: The June 1995 campaign also included systematic neighbourhood searches. To insure maximum surprise, the unannounced raids would typically occur at four A.M. "Altogether," MacMillan reported, "The cartel owned about 12,000 properties in the city. These included apartment buildings they had constructed with drug profits. The first two floors would often have occupied flats and security guards to make them look normal, while higher-level rooms were filled with rare art, gold and other valuables. Some of the apartment rooms were filled with stacks of 100-dollar bills that had been wrapped in plastic bags and covered with mothballs. Hot off American streets, this money was waiting to be counted, deposited or shipped out of the country."

The authorities also found underground vaults in the fields behind some of the big haciendas. Lifting up concrete blocks, they discovered stairwells descending into secret rooms that contained up to 9 million dollars in cash. This was so-called 'throwaway' money. Serious funds were laundered through banks or pumped into 'legitimate' businesses. To facilitate wire transfers, the cartel had purchased a chain of financial institutions in Colombia called the Workers Bank.

20. Dean Latimer, 'Cali Cartel Crackdown?' *High Times* [database online, cited 8 August 1995]. Available at [www.hightimes.com](http://www.hightimes.com).

21. The vigils have been held in the Pascual Guerrero stadium since August 1995. 22. After serving six months of his sentence, Santacruz embarrassed officials by riding out of the main gate of the maximum-security prison in a car that resembled one driven by prosecutors.

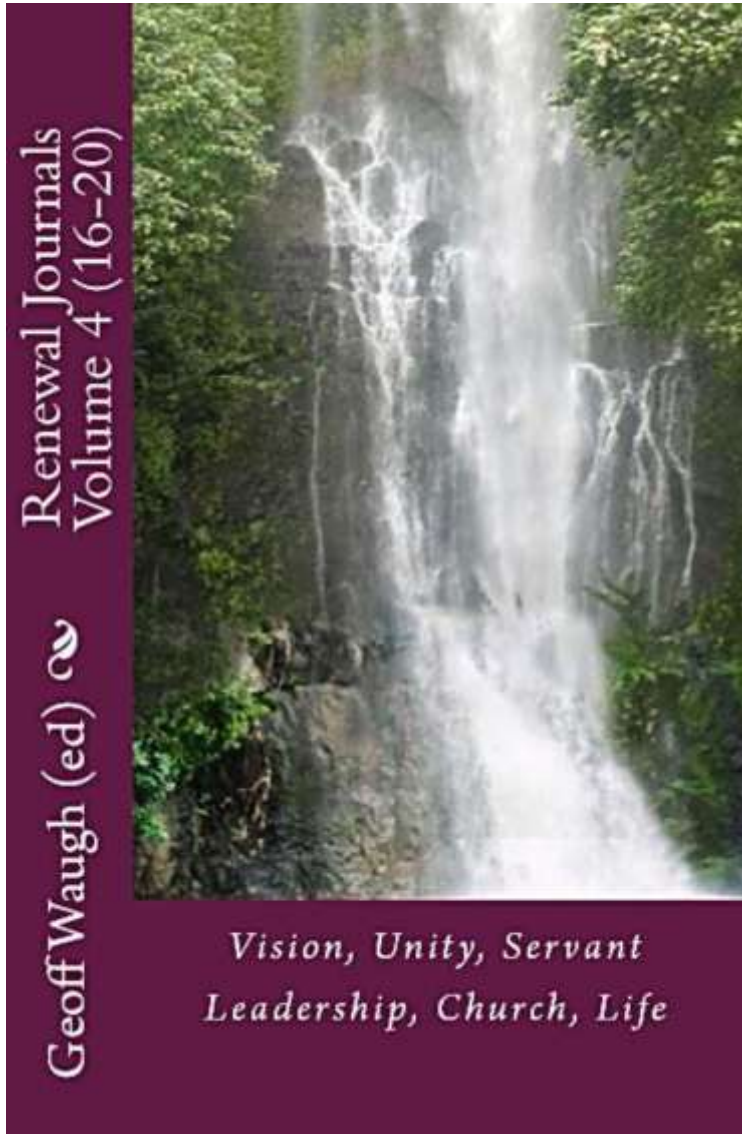
23. As the authorities probed the mountain of paperwork confiscated during government raids, they discovered at least two additional "capos" of the Cali cartel. The most notorious of these, Helmer 'Pacho' Herrera, turned himself in to police at the end of August 1996. The other, Justo Perafan, was not linked to the Cali operations until November 1996 because of a previous connection with the Valle cartel. 24. To appreciate the extent of these changes on the city, one has only to walk past the vacant haciendas of the drug barons. In addition to serving as monuments of human folly, these ghost towns stand as eloquent testimonies of the power of prayer.

25. "Gracias a Dios No Explotó," *El Pais*, Cali, November 6, 1996; "En Cali Desactivan Un 'Carrobomba,' *El.Pais*, Cali, November 6, 1996, n.p.

26. For a more complete version of the Kiambu story, see *The Twilight Labyrinth* pp. 295-298.

27. The pastors came out of this season with a five-part strategy for turning their community around: (1) set aside a day for fasting and confession of sin; (2) require Christian men to improve the way they treat their wives and families; (3) promote reconciliation between churches; (4) raise up trained intercessors for the city, and (5) conduct spiritual mapping.

This article is from Chapter 1, "Snapshots of Glory" (pp. 15-53) of *Informed Intercession* (Renew 1999) by George Otis Jr., reproduced with permission of Gospel Light publications, Ventura, California, USA ([www.gospellight.com](http://www.gospellight.com)). See Peter Wagner's review comments in the Reviews section of this *Renewal Journal*.



***Renewal Journals Volume 4 (16-20)***  
**Vision, Unity, Servant Leadership,  
Church, Life**



## 2 *Lessons from Revivals*

### **Richard Riss**



*Dr Richard Riss published many books and articles on revival. Here he summarises lessons he has learned from his research.*

The word 'revival' is often used for situations in which God is blessing in unusual and supernatural ways. During times of revival, the results of ministry are always completely out of proportion to the resources used to accomplish them. For many of us, it is very easy, especially on an unconscious level, to forget that the fruits of God's blessing are not at all due to our own gifts and resources.

I remember a number of years ago, during the Charismatic movement of the early 1970s, that people would often say that if you went to a meeting in which the Lord was present, you could go up to the front of a gathering and just say anything and sit down, and the Lord would minister to those who were present. What they meant by this was that, when the blessing of the Lord was present, his work would be accomplished. People were brought to repentance and reconciliation, and there would be healing, not because of any formulas that were to be followed, nor because any

individual human agent was important, but because God was present to deliver and heal.

The words that were spoken almost seemed incidental. Fine oratory is no better able to convey God's healing than broken, ungrammatical English. Even words that seemed irrelevant or inappropriate could carry power if God chose to bless those words.

### **T. L. and Daisy Osborne**

A number of years ago, I was doing some research on the lives of T. L. and Daisy Osborne. The more I learned about their ministry, the more I was impressed by the fact that there was absolutely no way, humanly speaking, that they could possibly have accomplished the things that they accomplished.

They began in Oklahoma as evangelists in 1941, pioneered a church in Portland, Oregon, went to India in 1945, and returned to America through ill health. Then in 1948 they found their way to Jamaica, where there were scores of healings and hundreds of conversions. But then, after returning to the United States for some highly successful campaigns with other major healing evangelists, they went to Puerto Rico in 1951, where there were over 18,000 conversions within twelve days, and then to Cuba, where thousands more came to Christ. From then onward, the fruitfulness of their ministry continued the same way, in a manner beyond my ability even to imagine.

As a result of studying their lives, and the lives of many others like them, I concluded that it can only be by the supernatural blessing of God that a ministry of this kind can hope to function. He is the one who opens doors, he is the one who fills stadiums, and he is the one who heals people and touches the lives of multitudes.

### **Demos Shakarian**

More recently, I read Demos Shakarian's book, *The Happiest People on Earth*, which describes in detail how the Full Gospel

Businessmen's Fellowship International came into being. And once again, the one thing about that book that really stood out for me was that the tremendous blessing that was upon that ministry really had nothing to do with the gifts, abilities, plans, and resources of the people involved in it.

It seems that God was purposefully arranging things in such a way that Demos Shakarian and the other founders of the FGBMFI would recognize beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was not through their own efforts that that ministry was brought about. During the first year of FGBMFI's existence it was a disaster, because God had not yet begun to bless it. Even though it was God who led Demos Shakarian to start it, it was a pitiful organization during its first year. I believe that God wanted to show Demos and his associates what it would be like without his blessing, so that when his blessing actually did come, there would be no question that its incredible fruitfulness had nothing to do with their own hard work, plans, gifts, or abilities.

The first FGBMFI meeting was held on a Saturday morning of October, 1951, at Clifton's Cafeteria in downtown Los Angeles. Oral Roberts had been engaged as the speaker. Demos Shakarian had many, many friends who were businessmen, many of whom he expected would come. He thought three or four hundred people would show up, and only eighteen actually came, even with a world-famous evangelist as an inducement. Because there were so few people, they lacked enthusiasm.

Here's what Demos said about it:

I looked around at the men who had come, most of them old friends. Dedicated people, committed Christians, and most of them already up to their eyeballs in committees and service clubs and civic organizations. The kind of men who will volunteer when a job needs doing - the kind who won't waste a minute on an outfit that isn't going anywhere. . . . I stood up. I described how the conviction had grown in me that God's Spirit in the next decade would seek new channels to move in. [Here and there I saw men looking at their watches.] No organs. No stained glass. Nothing more that men can pigeonhole as 'religious.' Just one man telling another

about Jesus. I had never had the ability to put ideas into words, and I sat down knowing that I hadn't gotten it across.

Oral Roberts then spoke, and he succeeded in sparking a little enthusiasm, but only enough to enable them to drag through about a year of meetings attended by just a handful of people. Thirty or forty men might attend one week, then fifteen the next. Most of the time Demos ended up buying all of the breakfasts, and there were never any donations.

By December of 1952, they were ready to close down the whole thing. One of the five directors said that he felt that the whole concept was a dud, and that their experiment had failed. Later, Demos's wife, Rose Shakarian, told him that this director was probably right. The meeting on Friday, December 26, 1952, was going to be the last meeting of the FGBMFI. But then, something happened.

The evening before that meeting, Demos Shakarian had a vision. He wrote,

The air around me suddenly became heavy, overwhelming, forcing me to the floor. I fell to my knees, then on my face, stretched full length on the patterned red rug. I could not have stood up. . . . So I did not try. I simply relaxed in his irresistible love, feeling his Spirit pulse through the room in endless torrents of power. Time ceased. Place disappeared. . . . And suddenly I saw myself as I must have looked to Him these past months: struggling and straining, a very busy ant scurrying here and there, dashing off to Europe to try to get the backing of an 'official' group, depending everywhere on my own energy instead of His. . . . I had acted as though it were my strength which counted - as though I personally had to start the thousand chapters that Oral [Roberts] had seen. And of course I hadn't been able to start a single one. God said, "I am the One, Demos, who alone can open doors. I am the One who removes the beam from unseeing eyes."

From this time forward, everything changed. That morning, at what was to be the last meeting, the FGBMFI director who thought the experiment had failed, handed a check to Demos Shakarian for a

thousand dollars payable to the FGBMFI. He had heard a voice from God saying, "This work is to go around the world and you're to donate the first money." Then Thomas Nickel said to him that he, also, had received a message from the Lord in the middle of the night, telling him to drive four hundred miles to Los Angeles to offer both his services and his printing press for the work of FGBMFI.

Demos said to his wife that evening, "Last night at this time the Fellowship was finished. Now we have a thousand-dollar treasury and a magazine. I can't wait to see what the Lord will do next!"

Ten months later, by October of 1953, there were nine chapters of FGBMFI and six hundred people showed up for an FGBMFI convention at the Clark Hotel in Los Angeles. By the mid-1960s, there were 300 chapters with a total membership of 100,000, and by 1988, there were more than three thousand chapters in 87 countries. But what was even more impressive was the work that the Lord was doing in the lives of the multitudes of people that this organization touched.

The experiences of Demos Shakarian and his associates during that first year go a long way toward emphasizing that, in and of ourselves, we are nothing. It is only the blessing of God that enables us to be effective in his service.

## **Watchman Nee**

Another individual through whom God chose to bring incalculable blessing was Watchman Nee. Although he had great natural gifts, the results of his ministry were way out of proportion to what could be accomplished by a human being in his or her own strength.

As a Christian in Red China, he was in prison during the last twenty years of his life, so he probably never knew that his life and writings had much of an influence outside of China, but he has touched multitudes in almost every nation of the world. This was the case despite that fact that he spent so much of his life in prison.

But Watchman Nee knew and understood very clearly that it is only the blessing of God that gets the job done in the Church, and that where the blessing is present, the results are supernatural, not only in their nature, but in their scope. It is God's blessing that changes lives and touches people, and it is also God's blessing that enlarges the influence of a ministry far and wide, completely beyond anyone's natural abilities.

It was also in 1951, but on New Year's Day, that Watchman Nee addressed his church at Nanyang Road hall in Shanghai on this topic in a significant sermon that later gained widespread circulation, especially in China, Hong Kong, the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South America, the Carribean, Africa, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Japan, the Middle East, Korea, Thailand, and New Guinea.

In this address, he indicated that, really, all of God's work is dependent upon his blessing. Moreover, where the blessing of the Lord flows freely, it will sweep away everything that could impede it.

We can be very faithful, conscientious and diligent. We can believe in God's power and we can pray to Him to show His power, but if the blessing of God is lacking, then all of our conscientiousness, all of our diligence, all of our faith, and all of our prayers, will be in vain.

On the other hand, even if we make mistakes, and even if the situations we face are hopeless, if we have the blessing of God, then the results will be fruitful.

### **A boy's lunch**

Do you remember the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, described in Mark 6: 35-44? Did it make any difference how many loaves and fishes they started out with? Of course not. What mattered was the blessing that rested upon what was available. We must recognize that the thing that counts is not the amount of money we have or the number of gifts that we have. It is the

blessing of the Lord, and that alone, from which humanity derives sustenance. Our own resources, our own power, our own toil, our own faithfulness, in and of themselves, are completely sterile. Apart from His blessing, we are totally inadequate, no matter who we are or what gifts we might have.

So many of us centre our hopes, not on the blessing of the Lord, but upon the few loaves in our hands. We have so pitifully little, and yet we keep calculating what we can do with it. The more we calculate, the harder our work becomes. Yet, if we let the blessing of the Lord be upon the loaves, they will be multiplied.

If the blessing rests upon a ministry, then thousands are fed. If it is absent, then even two hundred denarii worth of bread is still not enough. Once we recognize this, then we can stop asking "How many loaves do we have?" There would be no need to manipulate, no need to advertise, no need for human wisdom, and no need for flattery. We would be able just to trust the blessing of God and wait for it. And we would find that even if we had bungled things, somehow, things would still turn out well. While we hope that we will be preserved from mistakes and from careless words and acts, we will find that if God's blessing is upon us, even our serious blunders will not ultimately hinder his purpose.

Very often, we only expect results that are commensurate with our own time and money, or our own gifts and abilities. But God's blessing is fruit that is out of all proportion to what we are. If we plan simply on the basis of what we put into something, then it can be a hindrance to God's working beyond our plans. On the other hand, if we set our hearts on the blessing of the Lord, then we will often find things happening that are totally out of keeping with our own capacities, and beyond even our wildest dreams.

Once these truths really grip us, we can discard as worthless all of our clever ways, our specious words, and our scrupulous work. Then, even if we are not completely conscientious about the work, and even if we make mistakes, the need of the hungry will still be met.

In preaching about God's blessing, Watchman Nee was, of course, talking about what has been known in our culture as revival. The lessons that he taught here are some of the same lessons that we must learn in order to understand how God works with respect to revival.

### **Past and future blessing**

One of the things that Nee observed is that "one of the most serious threats to future blessing is past blessing. . . . If we accept what He has done in the past as the measure of His future working, then His blessing in the past will become a hindrance to future blessing."

One good illustration of this principle comes, again, from the lives of Demos and Rose Shakarian. Their families had emigrated from Armenia, where there had been a great revival which resulted from a group of on-fire Christians visiting Armenia from Russia, just across the border, in the year 1900. Many of these Armenians soon emigrated en masse to California as a result of a prophecy of a coming persecution, which was fulfilled in 1914.

But by 1940, things had changed. It was still ten years before the founding of the FGBMFI, but Demos and Rose Shakarian were already being led of God into transdenominational ministry. That summer, in accordance with God's direction, they did a series of outdoor evangelistic meetings near Lincoln Park in Downey, California, their home town.

However, they soon began to experience resistance from the Elders of their church. As these meetings continued week after week, the older people of their church began to protest. For the first time in their lives they found themselves in conflict with their parents' generation. They tried to get the permission of the Elders, but without success. It looked to them as though they would have to cancel their plans to hold meetings the following summer. In the end, Demos's father was able to get permission from the Elders.

The meetings did carry on the next summer, but it taught Demos a lesson. Here's what he wrote:



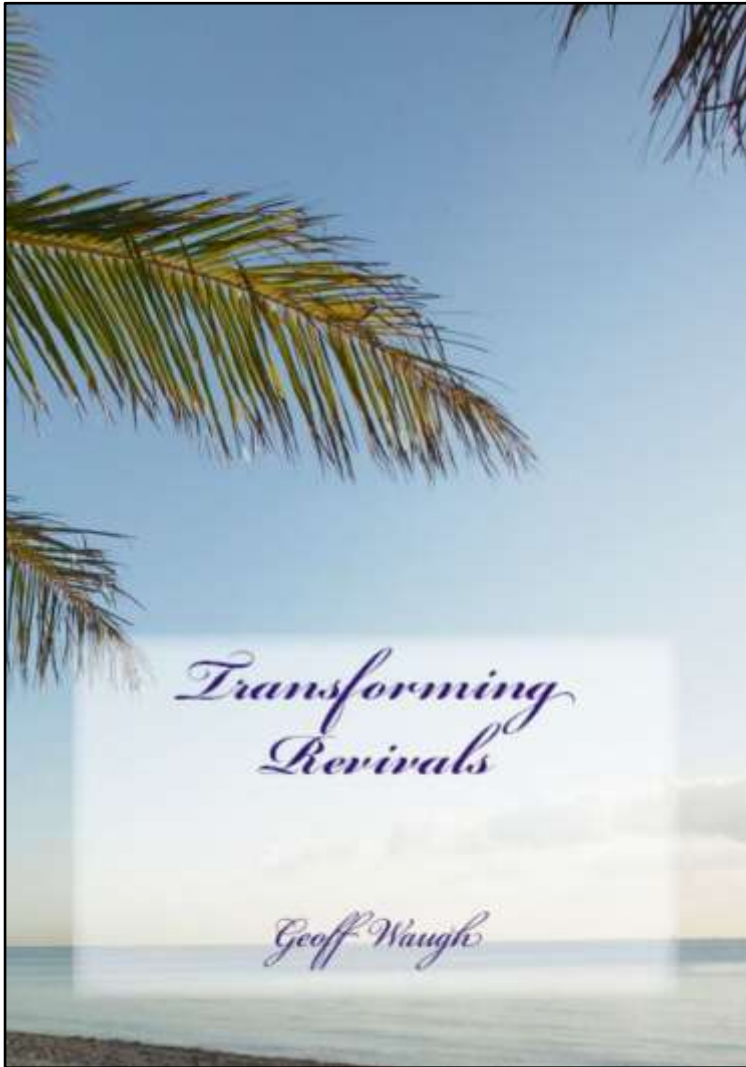
The wind of Pentecost, which had blown out of Russia into Armenia . . . had dwindled by now into a denomination as rigid as any other. It was always this way. All through history, each fresh outpouring of the Spirit soon became, in human hands, a new orthodoxy. The great revival on Azusa Street, for example, . . . which started out in freedom and joy and a breaking down of barriers, had solidified by the 1940s into a number of self-contained churches who couldn't communicate even with each other, let alone with the world as a whole.

This is a principle of revival that is easily observable. I wrote about it myself in a magazine article more than fifteen years ago, in which I observed that it is probably this phenomenon, more than anything else, that has brought about the formation of new denominations, and before that time, the founding of new monastic orders within the Roman Catholic Church. Old institutional forms soon become inadequate for the new thing that God begins to do.

So what can we learn from this?

First, to be flexible enough to allow God to do his thing.

And second, to remember that it is God who is doing his work through us, and that apart from him, we can't accomplish anything. But with him, we can and will, turn the world upside-down, just as it happened in the days of Peter, Paul, Timothy, John, Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.



***Transforming Revivals***  
See [renewaljournal.com](http://renewaljournal.com)

### *3 Spiritual Warfare*

**Cecelia Estillore Oliver**



*Cecelia Estillore is a medical doctor who studied for her Bachelor of Ministry degree at the School of Ministries, Christian Heritage College, Brisbane.*

The Great Commission for worldwide evangelisation was thrust into the hands of the early church by Jesus Christ prior to his ascension. A study of the New Testament reveals several keys to fulfilling this mandate. One of those keys is spiritual warfare and its relationship to the Great Commission and in particular, to revival and evangelism.

Cities are central to God's redemptive strategy. The Great Commission begins with a city – Jerusalem - and culminates when another city - the new Jerusalem - becomes God's dwelling with his people. In order to fulfill the Great Commission, we must reach every city on earth with the gospel. In order for the gospel to reach every creature, The Church is called to engage the forces of evil.

The battleground is the heavenly places. This is where the battle for our cities is won or lost (Silvoso 1994:21, 97)

### **Warfare Principles**

As Christians living in this fallen world we are caught in the spiritual war raging between the kingdom of darkness under Satan's rule and the kingdom of God. This spiritual battle is described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.

The church, ministering in the power of God's Spirit, has many answers to human needs and problems, including personal and community health and wholeness, if we take seriously the ministry of Jesus and how he has commissioned us to do what he did (Matthew 28:18-20). This does not ignore God-given medical ministries and resources, but acknowledges they are only a part of God's provision for our needs.

Satan is a master strategist in perverting God's plan and purposes for the nations. His kingdom consists of a hierarchy of principalities, powers, rulers and wickedness in high places which he has assigned over people, cities, and nations, veiling their eyes with deception and lies from seeing the truth of God (Ephesians 6:12; 2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Unfortunately, Christian ignorance and complacency have given the enemy ground to advance. The New Testament exhorts believers not to be ignorant of the schemes of the Devil whose main aim is to kill, steal and destroy mankind and all creation. Therefore, Christians are called to be proactive and militant in waging war in the heavenly places.

The real battle is spiritual and all evangelistic crusades regardless of their high technology will be minimally effective unless the battle is won in the spirit realm.

How then do we go about doing spiritual warfare? In doing spiritual warfare a few basic principles need to be understood.

First, we need to understand that we must have a personal intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be yielded and humbly submitted to his Lordship.

Second, we need to resist the devil and flee from his evil ways. Holiness and purity of heart are important in maintaining strong armour as we advance into spiritual warfare (James 4:6-7; Ephesians 6:11-12).

Third, we need to know and understand our identity, position and victory in Christ Jesus. In short, our worship of God should lead us to warfare against evil.

### **Delegated Authority**

These principles must be backed up by our knowledge and understanding of the fact that Christ has won the victory through his death on the cross and his resurrection from the power of death. According to Colossians 2:15, Jesus defeated and disarmed Satan and his cohorts and made a public spectacle of them. Through our belief in Him, we are delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of light, forgiven and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Colossians 1:13-14).

With that same power over sin and death, we are also given the delegated authority and power over the devil and his kingdom just like Jesus modelled in his life and ministry.

With this authority comes responsibility. According to Peter Wagner, "if we do not pray against our spiritual enemies, they will, indeed, prey upon us."(1996:121).

Wagner identifies three levels of spiritual warfare, namely: ground level spiritual warfare which is involved in casting out demons from people, occult-level spiritual warfare which centres on warfare against the occult and, strategic-level spiritual warfare which deals

with territorial spirits (1992:17-20).

Spiritual warfare is not an end in itself but just as Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) it is a means towards the end of seeking and saving that which is lost (Luke 19:10). Just as in any battle, spiritual warfare can lead to casualties. Although everyone is called to intercede and pray, not everyone is called to do front-line strategic-level spiritual warfare. Neither is it for the faint hearted and immature.

### **Warfare, Revival and Evangelism**

Prayer and intercession are constant features of revival. Prayer is the number one weapon of spiritual warfare. Although not everyone prays for the lost, it has been proven that innovative strategic warfare for the lost has brought revival and societal transformation in many places all over the world. In fact, revival has never been birthed without prayer and intercession, for God acts on the prayers of the saints. Spiritual warfare creates the climate over regional areas, paving the way for God's sovereign movement to come.

What is the relationship of revival and evangelism? John Dawson says,

Revival is what the church first experiences; evangelism is what she then engages in. Revival is periodic; evangelism is continuous. Revival cannot last; evangelism must not stop (cited by Pratney 1994:17).

On the other hand, Roy Fish states that "*the requirement for securing revival becomes the requirement for sustaining revival*" which is supported by the saying that "*what is gained by intercession must be maintained by intercession*" (cited by Deiro 1998:27). In other words, revival can be continuous.

Personally, I believe that revival can become ongoing just like the early church times. Revival should not really be an exception nor should it be limited to being periodic. Admittedly, history reveals its periodicity and it is a challenge for the Church to be in continuous revival. As Vance Havner states, "revival is simply New

Testament Christianity, the saints getting back to normal”(cited by Pratney 1994:15).

What is normal? The New Testament Church says that the disciples turned the world upside down as revival broke out and Christianity spread. The church was then in continuous revival and outwardly focused. Today, the 21<sup>st</sup> century church is being pointed to a new apostolic wineskin of doing church.

Pablo Deiros supports this emerging perspective and states that “authentic spiritual revival cannot be separated from the mission of the Church.” He considers three things that are instructive for revival movements: the destruction of spiritual strongholds over cities and nations, revival for the common people, and evangelism (1998:53).

In addition, Erickson says that the heart of the ministry is the Gospel. He goes on to describe the example of the ministry of Jesus and how he was anointed to preach the Gospel. Moreover, Jesus charged his apostles to continue his ministry and gave them the Great commission (1985:1059-1060; Luke 4: 18; Mark 16:15-18).

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:18-19). “And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons...and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:1-2).

A study of the above scriptures and Luke 10:1-22 shows the relationship between spiritual warfare and evangelism. Jesus actually trained his disciples to be aggressive in spiritual warfare and evangelism before he gave them the mandate for worldwide evangelism prior to his ascension.

Today, history records a startling convergence, beginning in the 1990’s, of the Church toward worldwide evangelism. Currently, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century church is going on strong in fulfilling its Great Commission. Unity and the love of Christ in the Body of Christ is becoming more visible and the Devil hates it. He knows his time is

short and he is launching his attacks on the Church from all directions especially on those involved in spiritual warfare and worldwide evangelism. Nevertheless, the victory belongs to the Church and on this promise she will stand until Jesus Christ returns again.

### **Life and Ministry Application**

We much to learn about the ways of God and the ways of humanity, including spiritual warfare, revivals, and evangelism. We need to engage in spiritual warfare in the army of God. My past and present ministries include this.

It's not always easy but obedience is the key. We need much discernment, wisdom, holiness, purity, humility, godly character and faith. It is a lifetime process of learning and maturing but we must persevere until the end. I cannot do it alone. I have much more to learn from all those who are experts in the field and from the Lord.

In conclusion, the New Testament gives a lot of examples and scriptural basis for spiritual warfare. Jesus modelled it and the early church lived it. The disciples practiced all levels of Spiritual warfare, were mindful of the principles involved, and used it as a powerful weapon in bringing the continuous revival and the explosive spread of the Gospel in the early Church times.

Today, the believers still have the same delegated authority and power over the Devil as won by Christ Jesus on Calvary. We are still called to engage in spiritual warfare which is a means to bring revival, win the lost, and fulfil the Great Commission.



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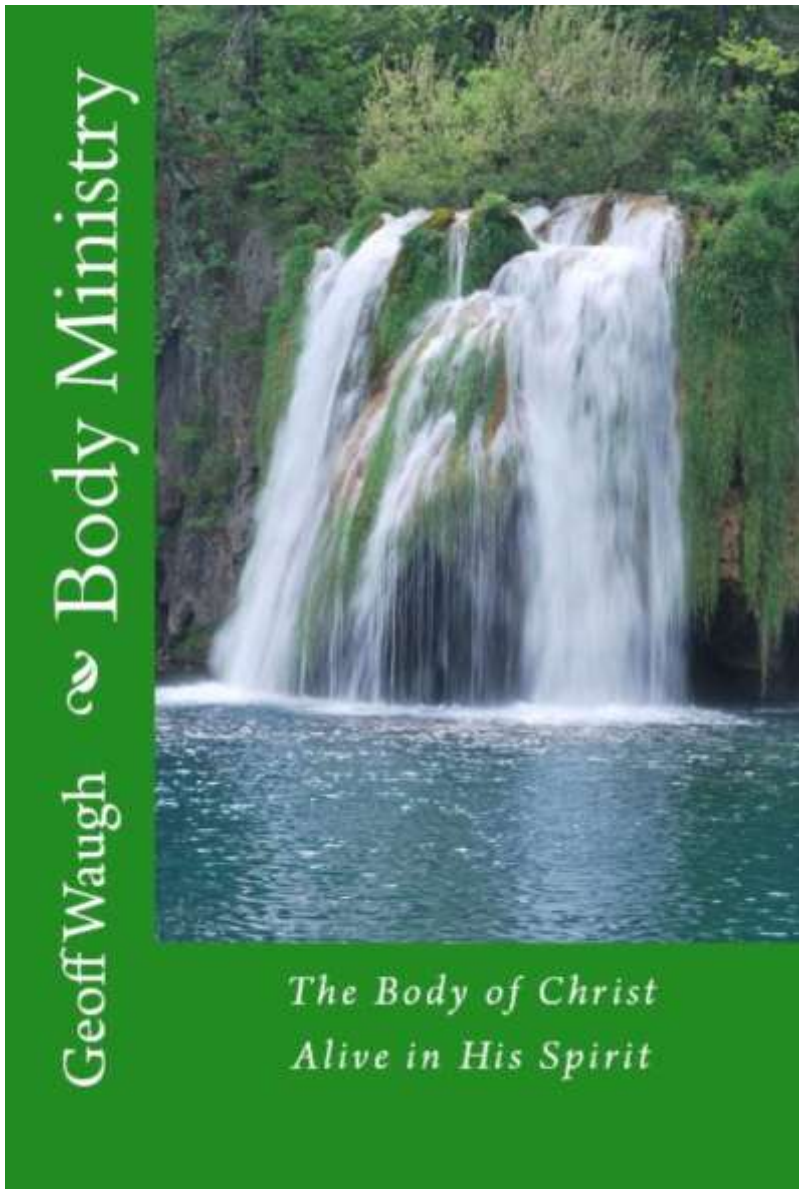
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***Body Ministry***  
***The Body of Christ Alive in His Spirit***

## ***4 Unity not Uniformity***

**Geoff Waugh**



Dr Geoff Waugh's book *Body Ministry* is a popular version of his Doctor of Missiology dissertation from Fuller Seminary. This article is reproduced and adapted from Chapters 4 and 5 of *Body Ministry*: "Spiritual Gifts" and "Body Evangelism".

Jesus insists on unity, not uniformity. We are one in Christ and will be for ever. That unity is incredibly and eternally diverse. We are all created different and unique. We have many different gifts and abilities. These are meant to flow together in powerful unity.

### ***Miracles in Ghana, West Africa***

God honours and blesses unity. I saw that vividly in my first trip to Africa. Pastors from the mountain town of Suhum, about 50 miles north of Accra the capital of Ghana, invited me to speak at crusade meetings at night and teach pastors and leaders each morning.

Four of us flew from Australia to West Africa in June 1995 during the mid-year vacation at the college where I taught. I did not realise that

heavy monsoon rains fell in Africa in June! So we arrived on a Monday amid pouring rain. The meetings were planned for Tuesday night through to Friday night, with various independent and charismatic churches co-operating. Their leaders and youth groups shared leading the extended worship each night.

When we arrived at Suhum on Tuesday evening the whole town was in a black-out because heavy rain had affected the town's electrical supply. Our team of Africans and Australians prayed in the mud at the market place which the team had prepared for the night meetings: "God, we are here serving you and we ask you to take over and do what only you can do."

Within 10 minutes the rain had ceased and the town power was on again. Our excited Africans began exclaiming, "This is a miracle. We will be talking about this for years!" Those monsoon rains held off till Saturday, and then the next week the deluges made international news on TV. But we had over three days of clear, cloudless skies and tropical sun.

Every night we saw hundreds respond for prayer, and many gave salvation and healing testimonies.

Pastors and leaders had asked me to teach about spiritual warfare in the morning sessions in a local church. As I prayed the Spirit impressed me to teach about unity. So I did. Prayers become powerful against evil when we are united, as Jesus demanded.

During the second morning as pastors and leaders prayed specifically for one another and confessed any resentments or hostilities, I had an open vision. I clearly saw the church fill with a bright, golden light which swallowed up the blackest black I had even seen. The Africans became more excited. Men and women shouted prophecies. Youths danced vigorously. I looked on perplexed, perspiring under the hot iron roof dressed in the mandatory suit of pastors and speakers!

That night miracles began in the long worship. An old man now blind discovered he could see as they worshipped and danced. Even the offering was a long process of dancing in lines, waving coloured cloths as they filed passed the offering box at the front, led by the pastors.

Their co-operating and unity had opened the way for powerful spiritual warfare. Everyone knew that a powerful ruling spirit dominated that area, but now it was gone. People felt the difference and enjoyed the freedom.

Later on teams went out in power evangelism, praying for people to be set free. The town market became unusually profitable and people could sell their vegetables and goods. Churches found new vitality. Previously isolated independent church, often competing, discovered united strength, love and unity. God blessed their unity.

The ascended, victorious, all powerful Christ, having conquered sin and death and hell now reigns supreme. He is the head of his body, the church. He gives gifts to his church, specifically those called under his authority to exercise authority in the church as leaders so that all God's people may be equipped for ministry. That is a powerful body, the body of the risen Christ.

Our Lord's intention for his church is for us to grow till we reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ who is all and in all (Colossians 3:11).

### ***A. Spiritual Gifts***

Body ministry requires spiritual gifts. The body of Christ ministers charismatically. There is no other way it can minister as the living body of the living Christ. He ministers in and through his body, by the gifts of his Spirit.

### ***Spiritual gifts differ from natural talents***

Charismatic gifts of the Spirit are different from natural talents. We can do much through dedicated human talent, but that is not body ministry through spiritual gifts. Natural talents do need to be committed to God and used for his glory. They can be channels of spiritual gifts.

Someone may sing beautifully or speak eloquently. That natural gift becomes a spiritual gift when it is anointed by God for ministry.

Spiritual gifts constantly surprise us. They often show up with great

power in unlikely people and in unlikely ways.

A common misunderstanding, for instance, is that those with an effective healing ministry must be especially holy people. However, many are not. They may not be faultless 'saints'. Gifts of the Spirit are given by grace, not earned by consecration.

Young, immature Christians may have powerful spiritual ministries, as they discover and use their spiritual gifts. Many do. That is no proof of consecration or maturity, even though to please God we need to offer ourselves to him in full commitment.

Romans Chapter 12 explains this. The well known first two verses challenge us to offer ourselves fully to God and so discover his will for our lives. Paul then explains that knowing God's will involves being realistic about ourselves and our gifts. If we know and use our God-given gifts, we fulfil God's will for our lives.

Body ministry, then, depends on the use of spiritual gifts, not just the use of natural talents dedicated to God. Both are vital for committed Christian living, and both will be present in the church. However, the church is not built on committed natural talent, even though churches sometimes operate that way.

### ***Spiritual gifts differ from Christian roles***

Similarly, spiritual gifts are not Christian roles or tasks. All Christians witness, but only some are gifted in evangelism. Every Christian has faith, but some have a gift of faith as well. All must exercise hospitality, but some are gifted in hospitality. Prayer is for all of us, but some are gifted in intercession.

We all have Christian roles such as leaders, helpers, servers, prayers, and supporting one another. Gifts of the Spirit can flow through these tasks. Our spiritual gifts add a deeper dimension to our roles or tasks – they add the depth dimension to those ministries.

Spiritual gifts flow strongest in unity with incredible diversity.

### ***1. Unity***

Each passage on the gifts of the Spirit stresses the importance of being one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:4). The whole context of Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Spirit is one of unity with diversity; one body with many parts functioning in harmony. Paul repeats many themes in the three key passages in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4:

- **One body:** The church is the one body of Christ on earth (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:4-6).
- **Gracious gifts:** They are given, not earned and not achieved (1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 6, 8-11; Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:7-8, 11).
- **All Christians have gifts:** There are no exceptions; and each gift is important (1 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:7).
- **Gifts differ:** Value our differences; we need each other (1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Romans 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:7-8).
- **Unity:** They function in unity and promote unity (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 25; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:3, 13, 16).
- **Maturity:** Spiritual gifts build up the body in maturity (1 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:12-15).
- **Love:** Love is the top priority; gifts must be used in love (1 Corinthians 13; Romans 12:9-10; Ephesians 4:4, 15-16).

Without unity expressed in love, diversity destroys the body's ministry causing chaos, division, sectarianism, and impotence. This is Paul's theme in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Paul had to correct the divisions in Corinth by emphasizing the unity of the body, bound together in love. Gifts are not to be a source of division and strife, but an expression of unity and love. Unless rooted and grounded in love, the gifts are counter-productive.

Unity in the body of Christ allows that body to function well, not be crippled. No one has all the gifts. We all need one another. No one should be conceited about any gift that God has given. No one claim that their is gift the most important, and magnify and exalt it at the expense of others. Gifts are to be used in humility and service. We do not compete. We minister

in harmony and co-operation.

Paul's great theme, "in Christ," expresses the unity essential for body ministry. In Christ we are one body. In Christ we live and serve.

Love lies at the heart of body ministry. The body is one, bound in love. The body builds itself up in love (Eph. 4:16). That is why 1 Corinthians 13 is central to Paul's passage on spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. "Make love your aim," he insists, "and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

Jesus insisted on love. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Our unity is not based on doctrine, but on Jesus. Unity comes from who we are, the body of Christ. This is a fact, not a hope. We are one in Christ. We are one in the Spirit. God has made us one. Unfortunately, being sinful, we often fail to live out that reality.

A Christ-like attitude, in humble kingdom thinking and love overcomes competition and critical spirits that divide us. That's where we see the Holy Spirit moving in power among us as we obey the Lord's command to love and serve one another.

Breathtaking community transformations are now happening around the world where we live this out in unity. Whole communities transformed by God now witness to his power to heal the land and the people when we repent and unite in obedience to his requirements.

Almolonga in Guatemala, Cali in Columbia and villages in Fiji all provide outstanding examples of this transformation. This information is from George Otis, 2000, "Snapshots of Glory" reproduced in *Renewal Journal*, Issue 17



## **Almolonga, Guatemala**

The town of Almolonga in Guatemala in South America, typical of many Mayan highland communities, suffered from economic depression, inebriation, and crime. The four gaols were full this town of 19,000. Many criminals had to be transported to gaols in the capital city.

Guatemala City pastor Harold Caballeros reported that, “the town suffered from poverty, violence and ignorance. In the mornings you would encounter many men just lying on the streets, totally drunk from the night before. And of course this drinking brought along other serious problems like domestic violence and poverty. It was a vicious cycle.”

Donato Santiago, the town’s chief of police, said, “People were always fighting. We never had any rest.” Now with crime dramatically diminished and the gaols no longer needed, police chief Santiago, says with a grin. It’s pretty uneventful around here.”

A few Christian leaders began regularly praying together from 7 pm to midnight in the 1970s. As they continued to pray in unity, increasing numbers of people were being healed and set free from strong demonic powers or witchcraft. Churches began to grow, and the community began to change. Crime and alcoholism decreased.

Within twenty years the four gaols were emptied and are now used for community functions. The last of Almolonga’s gaols closed in 1994, and is now remodelled building called the ‘Hall of Honour’ used for municipal ceremonies and weddings.

The town’s agricultural base was transformed. Their fields have become so fertile they yield three large harvests a year. Previously, the area exported four truckloads of produce a month. Now they are exporting as many as 40 truckloads a day. Farmers buy big Mercedes trucks with cash, and then attach

their testimony to the shiny vehicles with huge metallic stickers and mud flaps declaring, *The Gift of God, God is my Stronghold and Go Forward in Faith.*

Some farmers provide work for others by renting out land and developing fields in other towns. They help people get out of debt by providing employment for them.

On Halloween day in 1998, an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 people gathered in the market square to worship and honour God in a fiesta of praise. Led by the mayor and many pastors, the people prayed for God to take authority over their lives and their economy.

University researchers from the United States and other countries regularly visit Almolonga to investigate the astounding 1,000 per cent increase in agricultural productivity. Local inhabitants explain that the land is fertilized by prayer and rained upon with God's blessings.

Unity did not happen overnight. It took time. It needed a small group of persistent leaders who began praying together, crying out to God for mercy and for change. That usually happens when we are desperate and realise that we need God's intervention.

We are desperate, or should be. We live in tough times as persecution and calamities increase globally. But there is hope.

Some leaders now look beyond their doctrinal and denominational differences to seek the Lord together in unity, as he told us to do in humility, prayer, seeking him and in repentance (2 Chronicles 7:14).

God can change whole cities, such as happened in the city of Cali in Columbia.

## ***Cali, Columbia***

Columbia in South America was the world's biggest exporter of cocaine, sending between 700 to 1,000 tons a year to the United States and Europe alone. The Cali cartel controlled up to 70 percent of this trade. It was called the largest, richest, most well organized criminal organization in history.

The drug lords in cartels ruled the city through fear. At times 15 people a day were killed, shot from the black Mercedes cars owned by the cartels. Car bombs exploded regularly. Journalists who denounced the Mafia were killed. Drug money controlled the politicians. By the early 1990s the cartels controlled every major institution in Cali including banks, business, politicians and police.

The churches were in disarray and ineffective. "In those days," a pastor recalls, "the pastors' association consisted of an old box of files that nobody wanted. Every pastor was working on his own; no one wanted to join together."

A few discouraged but determined pastors began praying together regularly, asking God to intervene. Gradually others joined them. A small group of pastors planned a combined service in the civic auditorium in May 1995 for a night of prayer and repentance. They expected a few thousand people, but were amazed when 25, 000 attended, nearly half of the city's evangelical population. The crowd remained until 6 o'clock the next morning at this the first of the city's now famous united all-night prayer vigils held four times a year.

Two days after that event in May 1995, the daily newspaper, *El Pais*, headlined, "No Homicides!" For the first time in anyone's memory, 24 hours had passed without a single person being killed. Then, during the next four months 900 cartel-linked officers were fired from the metropolitan police force.

By August 1995, the authorities had captured all seven of the

targeted cartel leaders. Previously the combined efforts of the Columbian authorities, and the American FBI and CIA had been unable to do that.

In December 1995, a hit man killed Pastor Julio Ruibal, one of the key leaders of the combined pastors' meetings and the united prayer gatherings. 1, 500 people gathered at his funeral, including many pastors who had not spoken to each other in months. At the end of the memorial service, the pastors said, "Brothers, let us covenant to walk together in unity from this day forward. Let Julio's blood be the glue that binds us together in the Holy Spirit."

Now over 200 pastors have signed the covenant that is the backbone of the city's united prayer vigils. What made the partnership of these leaders so effective are the same things that always bring God's blessings: clean hearts, right relationships, and united prayer.

As the kingdom of God became more real in Cali, it affected all levels of society including the wealthy and educated. A wealthy businessman and former mayor said, "It is easy to speak to upper-class people about Jesus. They are respectful and interested." Another successful businessman adds that the gospel is now seen as practical rather than religious.

Churches grow fast. One church that meets in a huge former warehouse holds seven services on a Sunday to accommodate its 35, 000 people. Asked, "What is your secret?" they point to the 24-hour prayer room behind the platform.

A former drug dealer says, "There is a hunger for God everywhere. You can see it on the buses, on the streets and in the cafes. Anywhere you go people are ready to talk."

Cali police deactivated a large 174-kilo car bomb in November 1996. The newspaper *El Pais* carried the headline: "Thanks to God, It Didn't Explode." Many people noted that this happened

just 24 hours after 55,000 Christians held their third *vigilia* – the all night prayer vigil that includes praise, worship, dances and celebration mixed with the prayers and statements from civic and church leaders.

City authorities have given the churches free use of large stadium venues for their united gatherings because of their impact on the whole community, saving the city millions of dollars through reduced crime and terrorism.

### ***Fiji, South Pacific***

Fiji now has significant examples of effective community transformation, based on honouring God in unity between churches and communities. Fiji has experienced many military coups. In spite of this, Fiji also experiences significant unity in local village communities and among many churches.

The 2005 documentary report titled *Let the Seas Resound*, produced by the Sentinel Group ([www.sentinel.com](http://www.sentinel.com)), identifies examples of transformed communities in Fiji, featuring reconciliation and renewed ecosystems. The former President of Fiji, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, and former Prime Minister, Laisenia Qarase, include their personal comments in this video and DVD report, now distributed worldwide.

In September 2004, 10, 000 people gathered to worship together in Suva, Fiji, drawn by reconciliation initiatives of both government and church leaders. Only four years previously such unity among government and church leaders was unimaginable. Ethnic tensions flared in the attempted coup of May 2000, when the government was held hostage for 56 days, and violence erupted in the streets of Suva.

As people of Fiji unite in commitment to reconciliation and repentance in various locations, many testify to miraculous changes in their community and in the land.

Three days after the people of Nuku, north of Suva, made a united covenant with God, the water in the local stream, which for the previous 42 years had been known as the cause of barrenness and illness, mysteriously became clean and life giving. Then food grew plentifully in the area.

Fish are now caught in abundance around the village of Nataleria, where previously they could catch only a few fish. This change followed united repentance and reconciliation among all the churches and in the whole village.

Churches in the Navosa highlands north of Sigatoka came together in reconciliation and unity. Some people in that area grew large marijuana crops worth about \$11 million. Nine growers were involved. The team leaders told the farmers that it was their choice, that they should obey God and trust him for their livelihood, without any promises from anyone to do anything for them. If they could not, then they should not participate in the Healing Process.

By the time the Process had finished, the people had destroyed the crop as part of the reconciliation Process. After the HTL ministry, a total of 13,864 plants were uprooted and burnt by the growers themselves. There were 6,000 seedlings as well.

Many island communities in Fiji and the South Pacific now report similar ecological and community transformation. See my book, *South Pacific Revivals* for further examples of healing of the land through reconciliation and unity among churches and communities.

This is not only an island phenomenon, where it may be easier for whole communities to come together. It happens in towns and cities too.

When we obey our Lord who requires unity in his body, we see miraculous changes. That unity can be lived out amid God-given diversity.

## 2. Diversity

Our unity is expressed in the diversity of gifts. There is one Spirit; his gifts are incredibly diverse.

The point is developed in all the body passages of Paul. Diversity is to be celebrated, not squashed; encouraged, not smothered; developed, not ignored.

Body ministry will use these gifts. God's Spirit moves among his people in power to meet needs and minister effectively. Those gifts need to be identified and used, and in the process, as in Jesus' life and ministry, special anointings enable effective use of all the Spirit's gifts.

The best use of spiritual gifts is proper use, not misuse nor disuse. Paul describes various streams of God's gifting.

1. God our Father gives personal gifts in grace. Often seen in our personalities and preferences, these motivating gifts include prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and showing mercy in compassion (Romans 12:6-8). They blossom in us as we offer ourselves to God, not being conformed to this world but being transformed by the *renewing* of our minds (Romans 12:1-2).

2. Jesus Christ, the Head of his Church, gives leadership gifts to his church, including the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). These gifts are the people – not just their ministries such as evangelising and teaching. They may be full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid. Most are unpaid, as with Jesus and the apostles. Think, for example, of the huge army of voluntary home group leaders giving pastoral care to millions of people, and reaching out to others in natural friendship evangelism.

3. The Holy Spirit manifests himself in our lives with gifts given to each of us for the common good. They include a word or

revelation of wisdom, a word or revelation of prophecy, faith, various gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy or speaking from God, discerning spirits, various kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

Paul even ranks God's gifts in order of ministry importance in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guiding or administrating, and of different kinds of tongues (1 Corinthians 12: 28). We sometimes mix up the order and emphasize the least the most!

Not only are we rediscovering the many and varied gifts of the Spirit in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but we are also rediscovering the vital biblical truth that these gifts belong to all God's people, not just the leaders, pastors or clergy. Together we learn to be supernaturally natural.

That motivates us all to be involved in ministries which include all the various manifestations of God's Spirit among us all.

The diversity of these glorious gifts can be summarised in the following way for a simple, practical application to ministry:

motivational gifts from God our Father,

ministry gifts from Christ Jesus our Lord, and

manifestation gifts from the Holy Spirit our Guide.

### ***Motivational Gifts from God our Father***

Romans 12:6-8 lists gifts in a passage about discovering and doing the will of God in the body of Christ, using our God-given abilities. This list corresponds closely to our natural God-made abilities filled with God's Spirit. Some writers suggest that knowing these God-given gifts in our lives motivates us to serve him well for his glory.



1. prophecy: so prophesy in proportion to our faith;
2. ministry: so use it in ministering or serving;
3. teaching: so use it in teaching;
4. exhorting; so use it in exhortation;
5. giving: so give liberally;
6. leading: so lead with diligence;
7. showing mercy: so do it with cheerfulness.

Most of us do all these things in various ways, but each of us will be gifted more strongly in some of these gifts. Knowing our gifting helps us serve the Lord with gladness, fulfilled in our calling.

### ***Ministry Gifts from Christ Jesus our Lord***

Ephesians 4:11 summarises the leadership or ministry gifts given by the risen Lord, Head of his church. These gifts differ from all the other lists of gifts because it is the person who is the gift of Christ to his church, not just their ministry gift:

1. apostle: sent by the Lord (originally the 12);
2. prophet: speaking from the Lord;
3. evangelist: proclaiming the gospel of the Lord;
4. pastor: shepherding the Lord's people;
5. teacher: instructing the Lord's people.

Increasingly, these gifts are being recognised and developed in local churches. Usually, where people are gifted by the Lord in these ways, they become leaders in the church, often unpaid (as

in home groups or specialised ministries such as with youth or children), sometimes paid (as on staff, part time or full time). This list in Ephesians is not a list of local church staff, although the staff will have some of these gifts. The more that the leaders in the church, voluntary and paid, can exercise and be supported in these ministries, the more the church will demonstrate the anointing and power of the Spirit in its life.

### ***Manifestation Gifts from the Holy Spirit***

1 Corinthians 12, gives two useful lists of manifestations of the Spirit in the body of Christ. Some people use the following helpful categories:

#### *The power to know:*

1. word of wisdom: a divine understanding for a need;
2. word of knowledge: a divine revelation about a person or event;
3. discerning of spirits: a divine awareness about spirit powers;

#### *The power to act:*

4. faith: a divine enabling
5. healings: a divine provision of wholeness;
6. miracles: a divine intervention supernaturally;

#### *The power to speak:*

7. prophecy: a divine word given;
8. tongues: a divine unknown language (occasionally known to others);

9. interpretation of tongues: a divine revelation of a message in tongues.

Paul emphasizes the importance of these gifts, and strongly argues that we need one another because we are all gifted differently. The eye cannot say it does not need the hand; the head cannot say it does not need the feet.

Gifts are gifts of grace. We all need God's grace as we grow in using these gifts, and appreciating them in one another.

1 Corinthians 12:28 then arranges various gifts in an order of ministry significance:

1. apostles
2. prophets
3. teachers
4. miracles
5. healings
6. helps – service
7. administration
8. tongues

Leadership in the church is crucial for it can release or stifle the use of the spiritual gifts of God's people. Leaders do not need to envy or fear God's gifting in his people. The more the body of Christ lives in its gifting and calling, the more the leaders themselves are able to live in their own gifting and calling, and not be overloaded with ministry which is neither their gifting nor their calling.

We all have many gifts from God but some people are gifted by

the Spirit more fully than others in various ministries. Gifts may emerge unexpectedly as we believe and obey the leading of the Spirit in our lives. We often discover God's gifting as we serve one another in various ways, for the Spirit then anoints us for those ministries.

Preaching, for example, can become prophecy as it is anointed by the Spirit of God. That prophetic ministry may happen unexpectedly in the process of a sermon. It may also be given in preparation as a word directly from the Lord.

Compassionate service and healing prayer will at times be anointed powerfully by God's presence in signs and wonders to heal. Our gift, anointing and role then merge together into strong spiritual ministry.

So role, spiritual gift, and anointings cannot be clearly divided. Indeed, as the Spirit of God moves in greater power among all members of the body of Christ, the ministry of that body becomes increasingly anointed.

Then the professional is swallowed up in the spiritual; natural ability is suffused and flooded with supernatural life; the human is filled with the divine.

Jesus lived this way. He laid aside the rights and powers of his divinity, though still being divine. He became fully man, not superboy nor superman, but fully man, the second Adam without sin.

Then filled with the Spirit from his baptism at around 30, he lived and ministered in the power of the Spirit. He was filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, and empowered by the Spirit. He showed us how to live a Spirit-filled life.

Following Pentecost, his followers did the same, though not sinless like Jesus. They too were filled, led, anointed, and

empowered by the same Spirit of God. So the gifts of the Spirit functioned fully among them also, though limited or marred by human weakness and sin, as Paul often pointed out in his letters.

You can ask for this, and expect it. The leaders and Christians in the New Testament church did that. They constantly prayed that believers would be filled with the Spirit. And they prayed for boldness to live courageously in the power of the Spirit and for God to confirm his word with healings and signs and wonders (see Acts 4:29-31). God answered those prayers.

### ***B. Body Evangelism***

Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered members of Christ's body evangelize naturally. They just share their faith.

Remember how you came to have faith in God – probably through friendships. Friends or relatives lead most of us to trust in Jesus and they involve us in church life through what has been called *body evangelism*. It is evangelism that incorporates new believers into the body of Christ, the church. Body evangelism produces growing churches. Most churches grow through this kind of friendship evangelism or natural evangelism. The goal of body evangelism is to make disciples.

Commenting on body evangelism, Vergil Gerber noted that it is goal-oriented rather than method-oriented. "Body evangelism focuses on the goal of making disciples who are committed not only Christ but also to the body of Christ." (1)

Giving an overview of early developments, Peter Wagner traced the beginnings of body evangelism as an identifiable model to a workshop with the Bible Fellowship Church in which faith projections were made for five years ahead. It worked. The

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1 Vergil Gerber, ed., 1980, *Discipling through Theological Education by Extension*, Moody, p. 41.

church grew 26.5% in the seventies, outgrowing the previous three decades by 282%. Body evangelism produced significant church growth.

He teamed with Gerber to apply this model to 52 churches in Venezuela commencing in 1972. The decadal growth rates of those churches jumped from 60% in the previous ten years to 250% in the following two years. Body evangelism emerged as a powerful application of Jesus' command to make disciples. Gerber wrote a manual on body evangelism which was used in leadership workshops conducted in fifty countries. Peter Wagner noted:

At the time of the Venezuela Experiment, Ray Stedman's book, *Body Life*, was very popular. It referred to developing biblical relationships among those who were already members of the body of Christ. Gerber and I thought that "body evangelism" would be a good companion term to highlight the kind of evangelism that would bring unbelievers into membership in the body of Christ. It could thus be distinguished from crusade evangelism and saturation evangelism in stressing that evangelism is not complete until the persons being evangelised have not only made a commitment to Christ, but also to the local church.(2)

The stream of body evangelism is wider than its technical use in which key elements are faith projections and goal setting leading to measurable results. Body evangelism is central to biblical teaching on the church and how it grows.

We talk to one another and share our faith. We involve friends in our groups and activities. God's Spirit leads us and draws our friends to the Lord, especially as we pray for them. We discover that we are empowered by the Spirit to help people,

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2 C Peter Wagner, 1983, "Why body evangelism really works" in *Global Church Growth*, XX:3, p. 272.

pray for people, and involve them in the body of Christ, the church.

Body evangelism has many expressions such as friendship evangelism and witnessing in natural, caring ways in normal life. This powerful expression of the body of Christ raises the issues of program evangelism and power evangelism.

### ***1. Program Evangelism***

I attended and appreciated John Wimber's course at Fuller Seminary then called "MC510: Healing Ministry and Church Growth." It was controversial. John, a visiting professor with his team of Vineyard leaders, came each Monday night for 12 weeks. He involved other professors such as Peter Wagner and Charles Kraft.

Following the required hours of teaching input we had a voluntary hour of ministry application or laboratory practice. I loved it. Everyone stayed for these practical times of praying for people each week, learning to pray in faith and with authority, led by the Spirit. I have done that often in class and after preaching. People are blessed and we have seen many healed, sometimes quickly.

The well known evangelical author, John White, attended that class that year, and wrote about it in his book *When the Spirit Comes with Power*.

John Wimber's books *Power Evangelism* and *Power Healing* cover much of that subject's material. He compared power evangelism with program evangelism.

"There is a part of the Church today which is functioning with Program Evangelism," wrote John Wimber. "This is 'Method' Evangelism. This style of evangelism usually tries to reach the mind by natural means. It is often a one-way

communication."(3) Evangelistic preaching is an example.

He cites examples like Crusade Evangelism, Saturation Evangelism and Personal Evangelism which tend to use verbal, cognitive methods to communicate Christ.

All of these have value and effectiveness. Program Evangelism has been used in all parts of the world and many now believe who may not have otherwise received Christ as Saviour. Crusade programs have won millions to Christ. It is, however, often incomplete.

Not only is it incomplete, but as Wagner and Gerber have indicated, it is often ineffective in making disciples who are responsible members of the local church.

After polling over 4,000 converts Win Ann discovered that 70-80% of them came into the church through relatives and friends, whereas less than 0.1% came as direct result of city-wide evangelism campaigns.(4) Lyle Schaller similarly discovered that 60-90% of people involved in the church were brought by some friend or relative.(5)

Evangelistic programs are not as effective as body-centred evangelism through the local church. Body evangelism involves more people in the church than many programs do. Programs are useful, but supplementary.

The programs which are church based have proved to be more effective than programs across churches. That is one reason why evangelists such as Billy Graham work so hard with their teams to involve local churches in bringing people and then nurturing them.

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3 John Wimber, 1983, "MC510: Healing Ministry and Church Growth" Fuller Theological Seminary, Class Notes, pp. 1-2.

4 D McGavran and G Hunter, 1980, *Church Growth Strategies that Work*, Abingdon, p. 34.

5 D McGavran, 1980, *Understanding Church Growth*, Eerdmans, p. 225.



So, program evangelism may be useful in some situations, but it needs to be based in the local church and should be a natural expression of that church's life and witness.

Program evangelism, however, falls short of biblical models. It often depends on the preacher or evangelist. Body evangelism calls for more. It requires the involvement of the whole body of Christ in the power of his Spirit.

I enjoyed reading about models of evangelism that my friend Tony Cupit describes in his *Biblical Models for Evangelism*. Those models call us beyond our limited programs into wide ranging biblical evangelism. They include:

1 **repentance** – John the Baptist, Jesus and the early church required it (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:36-38);

2 **new birth** – Jesus explained it (John 3:1-3);

3 **new life style** – Jesus lived it and called for it as with the Samaritan woman, rich young ruler and woman caught in adultery (John 4:39-41; Mark 10:21-22; John 8:1-11);

4 **story-telling** – Jesus' parables include evangelism as with the Prodigal Son, and the lost coin and lost sheep (Luke 15);

5 **preaching** – Peter, Stephen, and Paul all preached evangelistically (Acts 2:14-42; 7; 26);

6 **teaching** – Jesus and others taught the evangel, the good news (Matthew 7:7-14; 28:18-20);

7 **loving community** – Jesus and his church demonstrated a new way of living which won followers (Acts 2:42-47);

8 **personal witness** – Jesus and his followers, such as Philip and the Ethiopian, testified one on one also (John 3, 4; Acts 8:35);

9 **missionary** – Jesus lived mission and sent his followers on mission including the 12 and the 72 (Matthew 10:5-7; Luke 10:1,9);

10 **pioneering** – Jesus and his followers continually pioneered, especially Paul (Romans 15:20);

11 **personal example** – Jesus and his followers lived evangelistically as with Paul and Silas in prison (Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 16:25-31);

12 **household faith** – heads of households and even communities lead multitudes to faith as for Peter with the centurion Cornelius and Paul with Lydia and the Philippian jailer (Acts 10-11; 16:13-15, 33);

13 **stewardship/discipleship** – Jesus required radical commitment to follow him as for the rich young ruler and prospective disciples (Mark 10:21; Luke 9:57-62)'

14 **marketplace** – Jesus and his followers constantly engaged people evangelistically where they were as with Paul in Athens (Acts 17);

15 **apologetic** – Jesus, Stephen and Paul were all great apologists (without apology!) for truth and faith in God (Mark 12; Acts 7, 17);

16 **nurture and education** – family teaching is powerful as with Timothy's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice and in discipling groups as with Paul (2 Timothy 1:5; 1 Corinthians 11:1);

17 **pastoral** – Jesus had immense care and compassion for people especially the poor, outcasts and oppressed (Matthew 19:13; 23:37);

18 **healing** – Jesus and his followers compassionately healed

people and many believed (Mark 2:10-11; Acts 5:12-16);

19 ***persecuted believers*** – Jesus suffered persecution as did his followers such as Philip in Samaria and Paul on his missionary journeys, but multitudes believed (Acts 5:29; 8:1, 4-5; 14);

20 ***stones will cry out*** – Jesus declared that would happen if people kept quiet about him, and his followers could not keep quiet even when ordered to stop as with Peter and John or Paul in prison (Luke 19:40; Acts 28:30-31).

These biblical models apply today, and many (including persecution) are powerful means of evangelism and church growth.

## ***2. Power Evangelism***

Biblical models go far beyond program evangelism. Power evangelism is centred in Jesus' final promise: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

John Wimber described power evangelism:

There is another part of the Church which functions with Power Evangelism. This means evangelism which transcends the rational. It happens with the demonstration of God's power in Signs and Wonders, and introduces the Numinous of God. This presupposes a presentation accompanied with the manifest presence of God. Power Evangelism is spontaneous and is directed by the Holy Spirit. The result is often explosive church growth. ...

The issue is not what the church is doing. The issue is what the church is leaving out! Where is the promised power of Acts 1:8? Where are the demonstrations of the manifest presence of God that we see illustrated throughout the book of Acts? Were they only for that day? Do they occur today?

If so, can we get in on it? Is it possible for you and me to work the works of Jesus?

Power Evangelism is still God's way of explosively growing His church.(6)

Body evangelism, when functioning in the power of the Holy Spirit, becomes power evangelism. The body of Christ moves in power.

Accelerating church growth provides vivid examples of power evangelism producing explosive church growth.

Here are some representative examples:

(a) David Adney reporting on China said: In one area where there were 4,000 Christians before the revolution, the number has now increased to 90,000 with a thousand meeting places. Christians in the region give three reasons for the rapid increase: The faithful witness of Christians in the midst of suffering, the power of God seen in healing the sick, and the influence of Christian radio broadcast from outside.

The foundational work of pioneers like Watchman Nee prepared the way for this powerful growth, nurtured in multiplying house churches.

(b) John Hurston, in Korea added: The world's largest church, Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul, Korea, where Yonggi Cho is pastor, attributed the phenomenal growth of that church to "the constant flow of God's miracle power" from the beginning.

(c) A third example is from Peter Wagner's observations: In Latin America I saw God at work. I saw exploding churches. I saw preaching so powerful that hardened sinners broke and

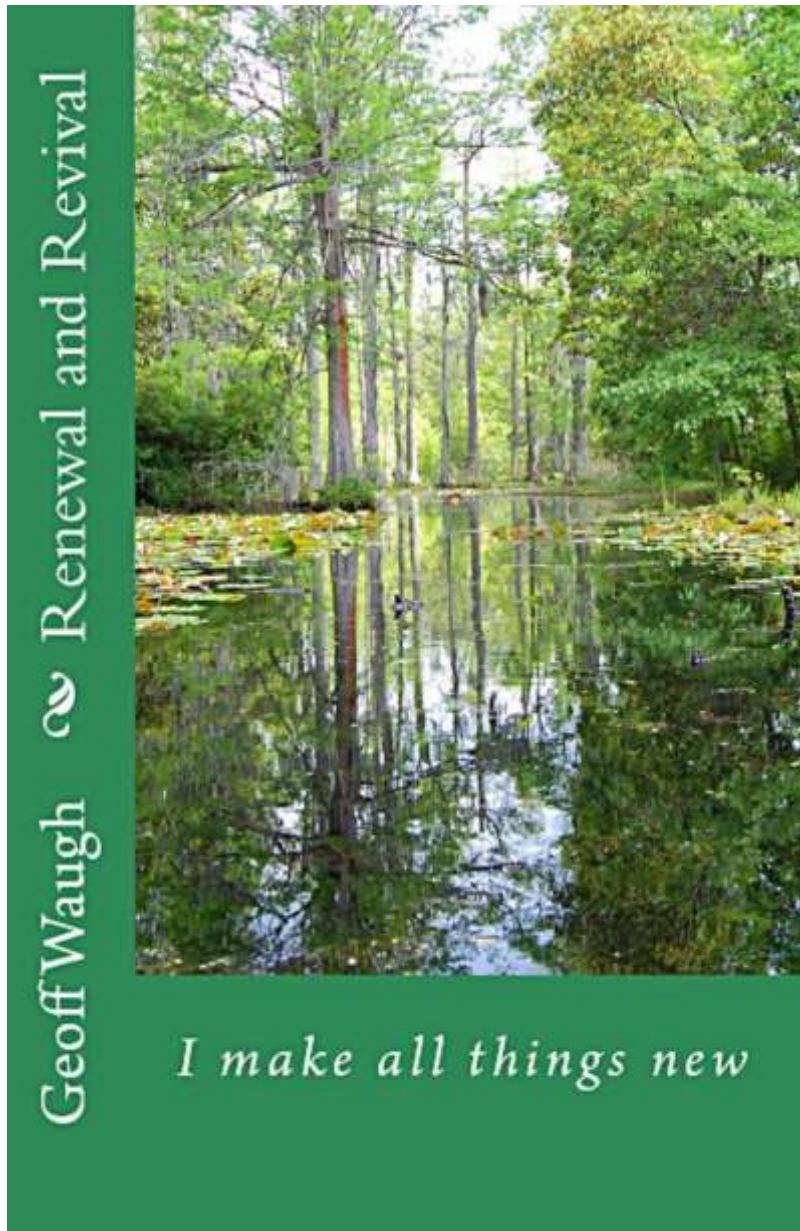
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6 John Wimber, 1983, "MC510: Healing Ministry and Church Growth", Fuller Theological Seminary, Class Notes, pp. 1-2. See John Wimber with Kevin Springer, 1992, *Power Evangelism* (revised), Hodder and Stoughton.

yielded to Jesus' love. I saw miraculous healings. I met with people who had spoken to God in visions and dreams. I saw Christians multiplying themselves time and again. I saw broken families reunited. I saw poverty and destitution overcome by God's living Word. I saw hate turn to love.

Power evangelism fulfils the biblical pattern of body ministry and evangelism. It goes beyond programs to the mighty acts of God in the midst of his people. Christ is alive in his church by the power of his Spirit.

God's Spirit unites in his body and his mission. Jesus prayed that we may all be one, as he and the Father are one (John 17:21) and Paul challenges us to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). That unity transcends all our denominational differences in an eternal unity we begin to experience here and now.



***Renewal and Revival***  
**I make all things new**

# ***Reviews***

## ***Transformations 1 and 2 (DVDs)***

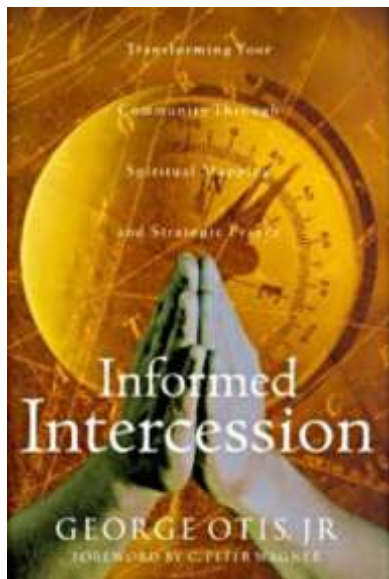
The powerful videos, *Transformation 1* and *2*, have sold in their thousands. They speak urgently and prophetically to the church today and show the way ahead for community transformation in this new millennium. George Otis, Jr. compiled and directs these astounding programs.

*Transformation 1* gives amazing reports of changed cities. These include Cali in Columbia, Almolonga in Guatemala, Kiambu in Nigeria, and Hemet in California. God answered the united prayers of his people in ways they had never seen before – drug lords removed, prisons closed, crops multiplied, communities transformed.

*Transformation 2*, released in 2001, gives further amazing reports of changed districts, even a whole country, again in answer to earnest, united prayer. Revival has transformed Canada's arctic region Ungava Peninsula. The Hebrides Islands in Scotland saw profound revival. Uganda welcomed in the new millennium with its president and his wife participating in a combined churches and community rally in their largest stadium at which they renounced evil and dedicated their country to God.

Available from Christian bookshops or from Toowoomba City Church, PO Box 2216, Toowoomba, Qld. 4350.

E-mail: [tccemail@tcchurch.com.au](mailto:tccemail@tcchurch.com.au)



***Informed Intercession: Transforming Your Community through Spiritual Mapping and Strategic Prayer*** by George Otis, Jr. (Ventura: Renewal, 1999).

*Chapter 1 of this book, "Snapshots of Glory", is the lead article in this issue No. 17 of the Renewal Journal.*

Review by C. Peter Wagner, adapted from the Foreword.

God has been raising up an extraordinary group of leaders for his kingdom in this generation, including George Otis, Jr. I can say with great confidence that the Body of Christ is in good hands for the future. Through these and many others like them, the Holy Spirit has been speaking some new things to the churches. They have the "ear to hear" that Jesus spoke about in his letters to the churches in Revelation.

These things, of course, are not new to God. They are scriptural, and indeed, a few members of the Body of Christ were tuned in to them long before the rest of us began to catch on. As we in repentance began to ask God to "heal the land" (2 Chron. 7:14), we then began to realize how little we knew about stewardship of the land and about the increased spiritual authority that is released when leaders become sincerely committed to the geographical sphere to which they have been assigned

The title of this book, *Informed Intercession: Transforming Your Community through Spiritual Mapping and Strategic Prayer* reflects a basic premise with which I fully agree: Accurately informed



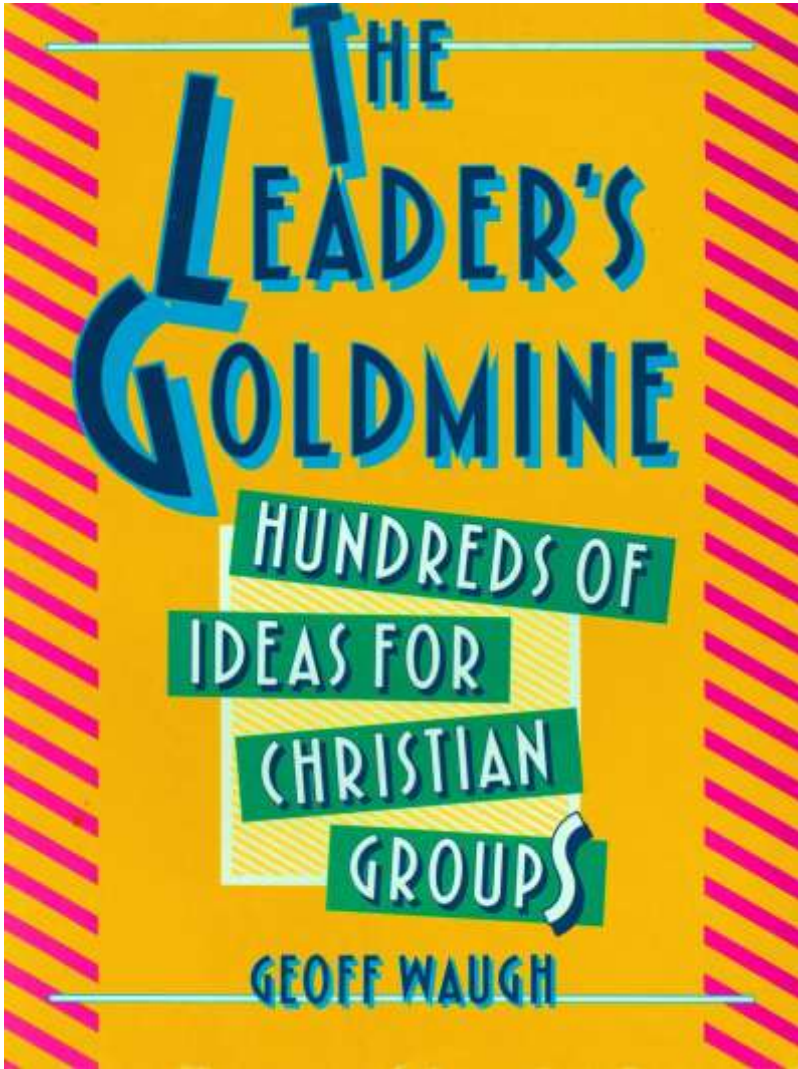
intercession is a critical component in transforming entire communities for Christ.

We all know and practice this principle when, for example, we pray for a friend. If they ask for prayer, our first question is, "What do you want me to pray for?" and we go on from there. But only recently have we learned how to ask such questions to our community and get the answers we need.

George Otis, Jr. has been the pioneer of this important discipline that we now call "spiritual mapping." As might be expected, the novelty of an activity such as spiritual mapping attracts its share of flakes. While they may be somewhat of an embarrassment to the rest of us, I do admire their zeal. Furthermore, as I have tracked some of them down and discussed this with them, I have yet to meet one who wants to be a flake. They will be the first to admit that they would love to have more role models and better instruction.

This book will meet those needs. This is a remarkable document that will raise the whole spiritual mapping movement to new levels of integrity and usefulness. I would hate to try to use a bread machine or a computer or a chain saw for the first time without an operator's manual. I am grateful that we now have the operator's manual for those who desire to attempt spiritual mapping.

What is spiritual mapping for? This can easily become so fascinating that it seems to be an end in itself. George Otis will have nothing of that! The goal is not just to gather information. The goal is nothing less than community transformation. Is this a high standard? It certainly is, and as you read this book you will be increasingly grateful, as I was, for the demands for excellence which persist from beginning to end. For those of us who deeply desire to serve and please the Lord of lords, nothing else would be acceptable.



*The Leader's Goldmine*  
Hundreds of Ideas for Christian Groups

*Renewal Journal*  
*18 Servant Leadership*



*Geoff Waugh (Editor)*

***Renewal Journal***  
**18 Servant Leadership**

## ***Contents***

### ***Renewal Journal 18: Servant Leadership***

Editorial: Servant Leadership	197
1 The Kingdom Within, by Irene Alexander	201
2 Church Models: Integration or Assimilation? by Jeanie Mok	209
3 Women in Ministry, by Sue Fairley	217
4 Women and Religions, by Susan Hyatt	233
5 Disciple-Makers, by Mark Setch	249
6 Ministry Confronts Secularisation, by Sam Hey	281
Reviews	297

#### **Cover Photo: 18 Servant Leadership**

Jesus demonstrated servant leadership. “I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15)

# ***Editorial***

## **Servant Leadership**

***The great Christian revolutions come not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when somebody takes radically something that was always there -  
H. Richard Neibuhr***

Challenges facing the church, its leadership and each of us, have always been there – in Scripture, in Jesus’ call and commands, and in the Spirit’s persistent regenerating and renewing of people and communities.

One of the great challenges facing Christians is how we understand and exercise leadership. We all lead. It may be in the home, with our children or youth, in the community, and in the church. Leadership in the church is not just from the platform or pulpit. We’re all involved, and can all take initiatives such as contacting people by phone, over coffee, in home groups or in a huge range of activities such as taking food to the sick or bereaved.

Jesus demonstrated and insisted on servant leadership. To lead is to serve. We lead by serving. Kingdom leadership is fundamentally different from leadership in society. Jesus emphasised this when James and John wanted recognition or prominence (Mark 10:35-45). How do we demonstrate kingdom leadership here and now?

The timely, significant articles in this issue of the *Renewal Journal* explore some of these challenges in contemporary ministry facing

us in the church. The articles were presented and discussed as papers in 2001 at the first annual Contemporary Ministry Issues Conference *hosted by the School of Ministries of Christian Heritage College at Citipointe Ministry College, Brisbane.*

This conference demonstrated many responses to current challenges. Keen to interact, teachers, students and visitors packed the seminar lounge at Rivers Café, an integral part of Citipointe Christian Outreach Centre at Mansfield. All the conference speakers are involved in leadership and ministry, not stuck in libraries. Most of them are so ministry and people-focused that their research is constantly tested in the lively interface of practice and theory.

Irene Alexander examines the transforming power of the kingdom within: the kingdom of God is within you. We can be liberated from the prevailing bondage to Christian law, and made free to really love and serve one another. Jesus insisted on that as the true mark of his followers: "By this shall everyone know that you are my disciples, if you have love for another." Irene emphasises that approach in her Christian counselling courses.

Jeannie Mok challenges churches in multi-cultural Australia to embrace our changing context with courage and sensitivity. Our ethno-centric pride or prejudice can increase barriers between people, when the churches should lead the way as radical bridge-building communities of compassion and equality. Jeannie co-pastors the multi-ethnic International City Church in Brisbane and is principal of the Asian Pacific Institute which offers a range of multicultural courses. These include the pioneering Pentecostal external studies from Manchester University in England to masters level.

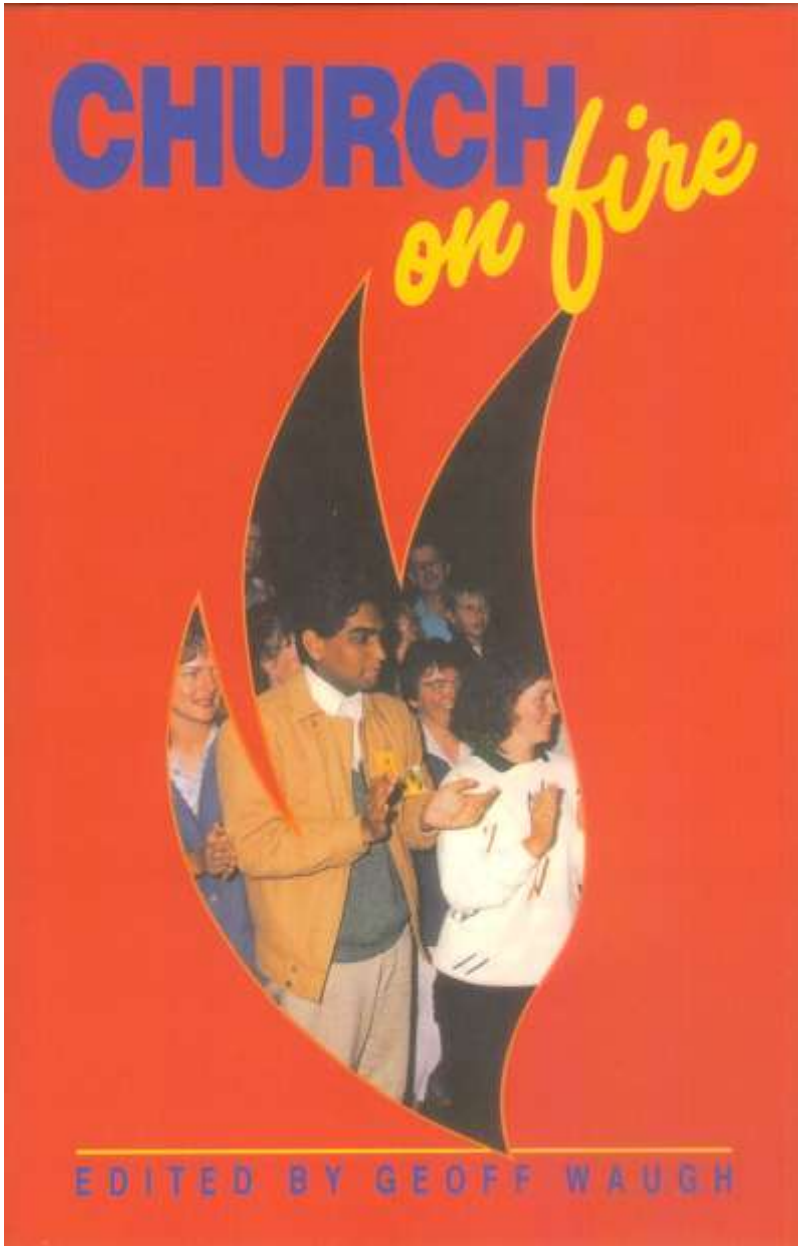
Sue Fairley tackles some sacred cows enshrined in our church traditions. The place of women in ministry and leadership raises temperatures all over the world. Tradition easily suppresses fresh movements of the Spirit who calls and liberates women as well as men to be leaders, missionaries, pioneers, and equal partners in ministry. Many traditions need to be challenged, and Sue does so in her ministry as Principal of Trinity Theological College in the Uniting Church in Queensland. Her article may surprise you!

Susan Hyatt reports on a significant international conference on women and religions. She emphasises a return to a biblical pattern of equality in ministry and service in her writings and speaking, including ministry with her husband in seminars and publications. Susan's report provides further insights into the place of women in Pentecostal and charismatic ministry in addition to those quoted by Sue Fairley in her article.

Mark Setch, senior pastor of a progressive Uniting Church in Brisbane, applies his doctoral research on leadership to ministry. He takes seriously Jesus' command to make disciples – not just make church members, pew sitters, or meeting attenders. Mark is also pro-active in united prayer and ministry among pastors and churches in the Redcliffe area of Brisbane where some leaders pray together regularly, some churches now gather for combined services, and some pastors exchange pulpits.

Sam Hey has been researching and teaching about biblical renewal and revival movements which confront the secularising pressures on all Christian institutions. He applauds Harvey Cox's conversion from *The Secular City* thinking of the sixties to the *Fire from Heaven* thinking of the nineties. A longer version of Sam's article is available in the *Contemporary Ministry Issues Conference Papers, 2001* (\$20 including postage). There he gives a slice of his Ph.D. research with 80 footnotes. Here we reduced that paper considerably, with only 30 footnotes!

This issue of the *Renewal Journal* provides inspiring, informative articles which we pray will help you understand and embrace what the Spirit is saying to the contemporary church.



***Church on Fire***  
See [renewaljournal.com](http://renewaljournal.com)



# ***1 The Kingdom Within***

## **The inner life of the person in ministry**

### **Irene Alexander**



*Dr Irene Alexander wrote as the Dean of the School of Social Sciences at Christian Heritage College, Brisbane, which offers a Bachelor of Social Science degree that includes majors in Counselling and Biblical Studies, as well as post graduate awards in Counselling and Human Studies. Irene researched Epistemic Development in Adolescence for her Ph.D. degree from the University of Queensland.*

More than any other single thing, Jesus spoke about the kingdom. In parable after parable, teaching after teaching, he showed us what the kingdom is like - a treasure hidden in a field, a father who welcomes an undeserving son, a vineyard owner who gives more than is fair to the labourers, a feast to which are welcomed those from the highways and byways, a place that is open to the poor in spirit, the broken and the sinner.

It seems that much of this teaching is about a kingdom which can be visible - a quality of relationships where the poor are ministered to,

where people show love to each other, where each person can be accepted and receive God's love.

However as we take the idea of the kingdom a little further we see that this kingdom is the place where the king reigns - not a physical place but a spiritual one - one which indeed engenders visible results, but one which is initially and primarily an inner place - the kingdom within.

Certainly, Jesus' teaching shows us the possibility of a kingdom without - a kingdom where people are ministered to. Much of his teaching has clear outward results - healing the sick, giving to the poor, setting free the oppressed, welcoming in the marginalized. But this visible kingdom is the result of an inner relationship, an inner responsiveness to God. Some of his teaching clearly speaks to an inner reality rather than an outer one. "Take the log out of your own eye before you try and take the speck from your brother's eye." What does this mean but an attending to our own heart secrets, our own weaknesses, before we try and correct each other.

### **Inner life and outer mask**

Proverbs 4:23 tells us to "guard the heart for from it flow the springs of life." What does it mean to guard the heart, to be aware of this inner world? John Sanford in *The Kingdom Within* uses the teaching against the Pharisees to show the difference between the inner world and the outer mask which we show to others. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy.

The word hypocrite means actor, and refers to the idea that actors of those days wore a mask which depicted their character. So the hypocrite was the mask wearer. The Pharisees wanted the world to see them as generous, holy, righteous people - that was their outer public behaviour. But Jesus exposed the inner poverty, the inner sins of the spirit, of much more concern to him than the sins of the flesh. "Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish and leave the inside full of extortion and intemperance" (Matthew 23:25). And in Luke 16:15: "You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as virtuous in people's sight, but God knows your hearts."

So the way to God has more to do with the inner life than the outer mask. Richard Rohr speaks of the way each person tries to find their way to God. They try to discover and fulfil the requirements necessary to please God. Many of us, especially those of us who grew up being good find that for a time we feel we do fulfil the necessary conditions.



However at some time most of us, and perhaps more quickly the more broken of us, experience God differently. We have some experience in which we find ourselves 'in God' where we know that we do not have to do anything to be accepted or approved of. We simply have to rest in him. The broken and the mystics find that place more quickly. The others of us may wrestle back and forth with fulfilling the requirements.

Often the church has taught us that we have to be good to get God's approval. The cross demonstrates to us that it's all grace. I enter into a relationship with a God who utterly loves me and as I learn to abide in his love, and look to him for direction I fulfil the law of love without even thinking about it. And so is fulfilled 'all the law and the prophets'.

### **Living in a love relationship**

Living by requirements is eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Living in relationship with the living God is eating of the tree of life.

Eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, choosing to evaluate good and bad from a place of autonomy, has given us a mindset of constant evaluation. And so we continuously evaluate everything that happens around us - and within us. "I don't like her

hair colour, that shirt doesn't suit him, he shouldn't talk like that, she should be more extraverted."

God's idea was that we should eat of the tree of life, walk in relationship with him, and with each other and experience life in all its abundance. When we walk in a love relationship with someone we are far less likely to be criticising and trying to change; instead we enjoy, and we notice. Certainly we notice their hair colour, their way of talking and their introversion but instead of judging we accept and appreciate the difference from ourselves. Living in a love-relationship enables us to accept difference and imperfection and walk alongside the other person, standing with them in their 'working out their salvation'.

In the garden of Eden story there is no mention of Adam and Eve being good. They were called to the dominion mandate - to look after the earth - to bring it to fruition; they were called into relationship with God and with each other. There is no mention of rules and laws and constant evaluation. The story simply states that they were naked and not ashamed.

Paradise was where people could be known for who they were and not be ashamed. I believe this is what God calls us to - a place, a quality of relationship with him and with each other in which we can be real and accepted anyway. Gary Hayachi, in explaining these ideas, says this is the gospel in a nutshell - it's not about being good; it's about being real.

Gary goes on to say that the one criticism that is levelled at the church over and over is hypocrisy. "You hypocrites. You tell us to be good, but look at you." I believe that if the church truly understood that it is not about evaluating and comparing and living up to standards, but rather it is about being known for who we are in our relationships, being conspicuously imperfect, but living in God's grace - then the world would be drawn to that reality and true humility.

When Adam and Eve, and we in them, chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we chose a righteousness based on comparison and living up to standards; a righteousness that had

more to do with behaviour and beliefs than a heart attitude and relationship. We became caught in a mindset of comparison and evaluation which did not free us from wrongdoing but only showed us when we did wrong. As a response to this choice God gave us the Law - a way of evaluating our behaviour which at least kept us in line with the way the world was designed.

However this was not his original plan, nor was it his final response. The Law was simply a way of bracketing our behaviour until God could reveal a better way. The Law was like a fence that kept us from wandering off into licence and perversion. A schoolmaster, a babysitter, to bring us to Christ. And then, in Paul's wonderful words of freedom in his letter to the Galatians, God revealed a better way.

When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, under the law, in order that he might redeem those under the law, that they might receive adoption as sons. And because we are sons, God sent forth the spirit of his Son, into our hearts, crying Abba, dear Father. Therefore I am no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir to the living God.

God's plan was, and is, that we should walk in life, in relationship with him, fulfilling all the law and the prophets by our love relationship with him, as his children, and our love relationship with each other - brothers and sisters.

### **Grace, not works**

We live in a new covenant where righteousness is based on grace not works. The disciples who lived with Jesus understood that he was the Messiah, but they did not seem to see the perspective of the new covenant. That was Paul's revelation. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost he simply stated that Jesus, the Messiah, who you crucified, was raised up again by God.

Apparently it was not uncommon for men to claim themselves to be the Messiah, but of course they eventually died and no more was heard of them. When the Christians however started proclaiming the Christ there was swift persecution. Why this drastic reaction?

The fact that there were differences between the Greek Christians and the Jewish Christians gives some clue. Stephen, the first martyr, was made a deacon when there were complaints that the Greek widows were being overlooked. When there was persecution in Jerusalem, the disciples stayed there - it seems to have been the Greeks - who did not uphold Jewish law, who were the ones who dispersed.

The point then which drew such wrath from Saul the Pharisee, had to do with the law. Saul, that 'epitome of legal rectitude', understood something the disciples did not. He knew the law. He knew that any true Messiah must uphold the law. But the Christians were preaching a crucified Messiah. And Paul knew the scripture - he quotes it in one of his letters - that said "Cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree." A crucified Messiah could not be upholding the law, because he is cursed by that law. A crucified Messiah was a contradiction in terms. It could not be.

Paul saw that what the Christians claimed struck at the law as the covenant of righteousness with God. He turned against the Christians as one with all legal righteousness and outrage. It is no wonder then that when he met God on the Damascus Road, and asking him who he was found that he was Jesus, the one you are persecuting, the crucified messiah, - it is no wonder he was struck blind for three days. For three days he must have been totally rethinking the place of the law and the basis of righteousness.

When the three days were over Paul understood something the other disciples did not. He understood that the old covenant was obsolete (Hebrews 6:13). He understood that the only way to righteousness was faith and grace. It is not surprising that he vehemently opposed the other disciples when they tried to still keep some of the law, wondering if circumcision should still be practiced.

Paul knew they had missed the point completely - it's all or nothing when it comes to the law. You who began in the spirit, he raged at the Galatians, will you now finish in the flesh?

## **Home free**

At the Cross God changed the rules. He finished with the old basis for righteousness, the old purity code which gets us into his presence by our behaviour. He declared us free to walk into relationship with him, saved by grace alone, with a righteousness rooted in Jesus sacrifice. I can now dance into the presence of a holy and righteous God, and know that his grace is sufficient, and that I am home free.

As I look at the cross I see the awesome love of God and I am inspired to give my life to him, not because I must, not to earn his approval, but in freedom, a response of love to his. And I am drawn into a love relationship with him, whereby I live daily looking into his eyes and choosing to walk in his ways.

Many of us have grown up in a modernist world that upholds the absolutes of law and morality and hierarchy. A postmodern perspective is far more likely to value relationship and spirituality and an authority based in authenticity. As I walk the journey with another I do not bring in rules and requirements. Instead I will, as Dan Allender says, look for the footprints of God in their story. John 1 says God lights every person who comes into the world. His footprints will be there in everyone's story. As I listen and walk with them I will find some evidence of his Being, some way to walk the journey, respecting their individual relationship with God, whoever at that point they conceive God to be - finding freedom and responsibility.

This kingdom within, then, is about being real - real with God and real with each other. Abiding in Christ - finding our true selves, naked and unashamed because of God's grace. And then living out that relationship in honesty and humility in our relationships with each other. Living in conspicuous imperfection (Sims' phrase), and openly known for who we are. This is freedom - and life abundant.

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## 2 Church Models: Integration or Assimilation?

### Jeannie Mok



Mrs Jeannie Mok is a pastor at International City Church in Brisbane and Principal of the Asian Pacific Institute. This paper is based on two articles written for Alive magazine.

Now that Australia is the most multicultural nation in the world, should churches alter their organizations to suit such a diversity of people?

Occasionally, the odd conservative politician may assert that it is the duty of migrants to become like all other Australians (whatever that may be) and not expect people to change things for them; after all, they are the 'foreigners' who came into this country, so shouldn't it be a case of 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'?

Similarly, why worry about what church model to plant or restructure - after all, these new migrants are the 'latecomers' and they should try to fit in or assimilate into existing structures! And

unfortunately, many churches do think this way and remain the way they are.

I would like to suggest that one of the *key* factors determining how we organize our churches depends on what we think about other peoples and their cultures. A close look at the variety of churches in Australia will reveal that how we organise our ministry and churches has in fact resulted from several myths or assumptions about ourselves and our culture and how we view *foreigners* and *their* cultures and communities.

These key assumptions influence the essential ‘flavour’ of a church and it will be shown that very often, these are misleading, bordering on racial prejudice, and should be replaced by more appropriate biblical principles.

An assumption that has existed for centuries has been ***Parochialism*** (the only one way assumption) – the ‘my way is the only way’ belief, where there is no real recognition of any other way of living, working or doing things. British Colonial practice is a classic example of a policy aimed at making Englishmen out of the natives. Not surprisingly, the European missionaries in Africa and in Australia followed this lead and forced indigenous peoples to give up native ways and renounce traditional ‘pagan’ beliefs and practices.

In our cosmopolitan world, Parochialism should be replaced by ***Equifinality***<sup>7</sup> (our way is not the only way) that suggests that there are many culturally distinct ways of reaching the same goal, or of living one’s life. In fact, there are many equivalent ways to reach a final goal.

Traditional Western Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) Churches reflect a parochial way of thinking. They tend to therefore to be ***mono-cultural***, carrying on in ways that ignore cultural differences.

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<sup>7</sup> Nancy J. Adler, *Domestic Multiculturalism: Cross-Cultural Management in the Public Sector* (102) in Gary R. Weaver (Ed) *Culture, Communication and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations* Simon and Schuster Custom Publishing MA, USA (1994)

Such churches could be Exclusionary, with one group dominating the others as all key decision making and administrative matters are in their hands.

In such Australian churches, if you do not speak the dominant language, you either sink or swim! Thus foreigners will always remain on the fringe since cultural differences are seen as a problem. Bible study groups, cell groups, etc., will not accommodate language differences. Often, there is a negative evaluation of culturally different people, especially if they are from non-European countries.

Another belief is ***Ethnocentrism*** (the one best way myth /our way is the best way). Such organizations recognize people's differences but believe that their way is still the best, since all other ways are inferior versions. This has in turn led to the establishment of Ethnocentric institutions which acknowledge that there may other ways out there, but "we feel ours is really the best way".

It is true that in such clubs and organizations, the chief purpose is to preserve special cultural and linguistic understandings and customs that have generally diminished in a cosmopolitan or multicultural setting. And undoubtedly, the flow-on benefits are important as it is not possible to express certain beliefs and feelings outside the boundaries of specific psychological/ cultural/linguistic traditions.

Thus *ethnocentric churches* are very much like monocultural clubs where race is the primary discriminator - membership is limited to a certain ethnic community (all Chinese or all Spanish or all Greek), but inclusive of all different classes and educational levels, with a limited number of selected non-group members and outsiders. Such churches are closed ethnic enclaves but within each national group (e.g. Chinese) is contained a multiplicity of ethnicities (Taiwanese, Hong Kong, Malaysian/Singaporean Chinese, Mainland Chinese). Policies change only under pressure since traditions are highly prized. Gender could also be a discriminator in the management of the church - in favour of male leadership. For example, Chinese evangelical churches are traditionally run by male pastors; female pastors are rare, and not highly respected by older members.

Then there is the **Similarity** myth which asserts that “people are all alike” or “they are all like me” since we all have the same life goals, career aspirations and activities. This belief is faulty since a study of people’s values, attitudes and behaviour in 14 nations showed that whilst people felt more comfortable believing that this ‘similarity’ exists, this was *not* the case.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, people felt more comfortable believing in this similarity since ‘Differences’ were regarded as a threat. Unfortunately, there are problems associated with this belief. One gets disappointed and feels anger or surprise when people do not act as one expects them to. Furthermore, this assumption denies the individuality of people, and negates their distinct characteristics.

Thus, it must be acknowledged that people share *similarities and differences*. (They are not just like me since many people are culturally different from me. Most people have *both* cultural similarities and differences when compared to me). It is thus a good thing to assume that there are differences *first* when meeting a ‘foreigner’, unless similarities are proven.

The Similarity assumption is akin to the **Homogeneity** or the *Melting Pot Myth* (We are all the same since everyone is and wants to be like the majority). Homogeneity proponents state, however, that as a nation of many distinct cultures, they realize that it is impossible to get all to be the same. Thus newly arrived migrants have to be integrated with the rest of Australians and become like everyone else. And since Australia is basically ‘Waspish’, the newly-arrived must assimilate into the new ‘Home’ culture.

These two assumptions (Similarity and Homogeneity) often underlie non-discriminating and culturally aware organizations like *International Churches* and *‘Melting Pot’ Assimilationist Churches*. These Churches recognise cultural similarities and differences but choose to attempt to minimize the diversity by imposing single one-best-way solutions on all management situations.

Most international churches believe that they are multicultural, but

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8 Adler in Weaver (102)

in reality they are not, since there is still the *one* dominant culture (the 'Waspish' normally). Competence requirements are higher for outsiders - especially fluency in the dominant language. But such churches do attempt to seek change by changing race and gender profiles. They will have a Missions group and international food festivals, etc., and allow token representation in management, and over time these could evolve into multicultural churches.

'Melting pot' churches operate on the belief that various cultural groups from all nations, must be treated with essential equality since "We are all Australians and we accept an Australianised form of English, and Christian moral principles and values." The belief is that in time, all will be unified as one large heterogenous 'stew' as cross-cultural marriages abound. In such churches, individual ties to ethnic groups culturally rooted to other parts of the world are not so important, as these are actually regarded as potentially disruptive or distracting. There is also the mistaken belief that as all are equal, all will have an influence in the pot. Hence, this 'multicultural stew' method is seen as truly the best way of unifying everyone.

This all sounds most reasonable but in reality, new migrants are under pressure to conform and accept dominant cultural principles. In Australia, they have to melt into an essentially Anglo-Celtic Protestant pot to be accepted. They must shed essential aspects of their traditional cultural belief and practice if they are to fit in nicely. The 'Melting Pot' is in reality the melting away of non-Anglo-Saxon traditions.<sup>9</sup>

The fact is that **Heterogeneity or Cultural Pluralism** is a hallmark of our society today. (We are *not* all the same); there are many culturally different groups in society. It therefore makes sense that in our policy and practice, we need to consider the many equivalent or culturally distinct ways of reaching the same goals, since our way is not the only way!

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9 R. Janzen *Five Paradigms of Ethnic Relations* (65) in Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter *Intercultural Communication* Wadsworth Publishing Company USA 1997

One model of a **Multicultural Church** utilises the **Equifinality or Parallel** approach. These are churches that recognise cultural similarities and differences; and allow parallel approaches based on members' cultures to be used simultaneously in each management situation. Such a church utilises a common language (through necessity), although diverse languages are still used widely for the respective ethnic groups. Senior management is committed to power-sharing practices, and incorporates leaders to represent each major ethnic group found in the church. It is usual to find that the key leaders can operate in a variety of languages, and are able to switch methods of cross-cultural communication to deal with the various ethnic groups.

Perhaps the ideal multicultural church is the **Synergistic** church, totally committed to the multicultural vision. This church recognizes cultural similarities and differences and uses them to create new integrative solutions to organizational problems that go beyond the individual cultures of any single group.<sup>10</sup>

For instance, at their combined celebrations, when the Spanish, Chinese and English-speaking congregations come together, International City Church in Brisbane, has 'invented' a new kind of praise and worship session with worship leaders from the three language groups leading the mixed congregation in songs incorporating all the three languages; so that all can participate in the same song!

Incidentally, this unique blend of languages has resulted in a project to produce the first real multicultural Praise and Worship CD in Australia.

Such a church also recognises diversity as a valuable strength (as productive, creative and resource-rich). Initially, there may be many communication problems, but once this is overcome, huge benefits are realized.

Given the fact that Australia's demographic profile has changed so

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<sup>10</sup> Nancy J. Adler *Domestic Multiculturalism* (110)

radically recently, perhaps it is time for us to re-think our churches. Should we now work hard at evolving our churches into **Multicultural** and **Synergistic** churches?

Are we inclusive and totally 'user-friendly' to the harvest (boat people and all) that awaits us in our own backyard? Or are we still focusing on a traditional (middle-class 'Waspish') clientele that is fast diminishing?

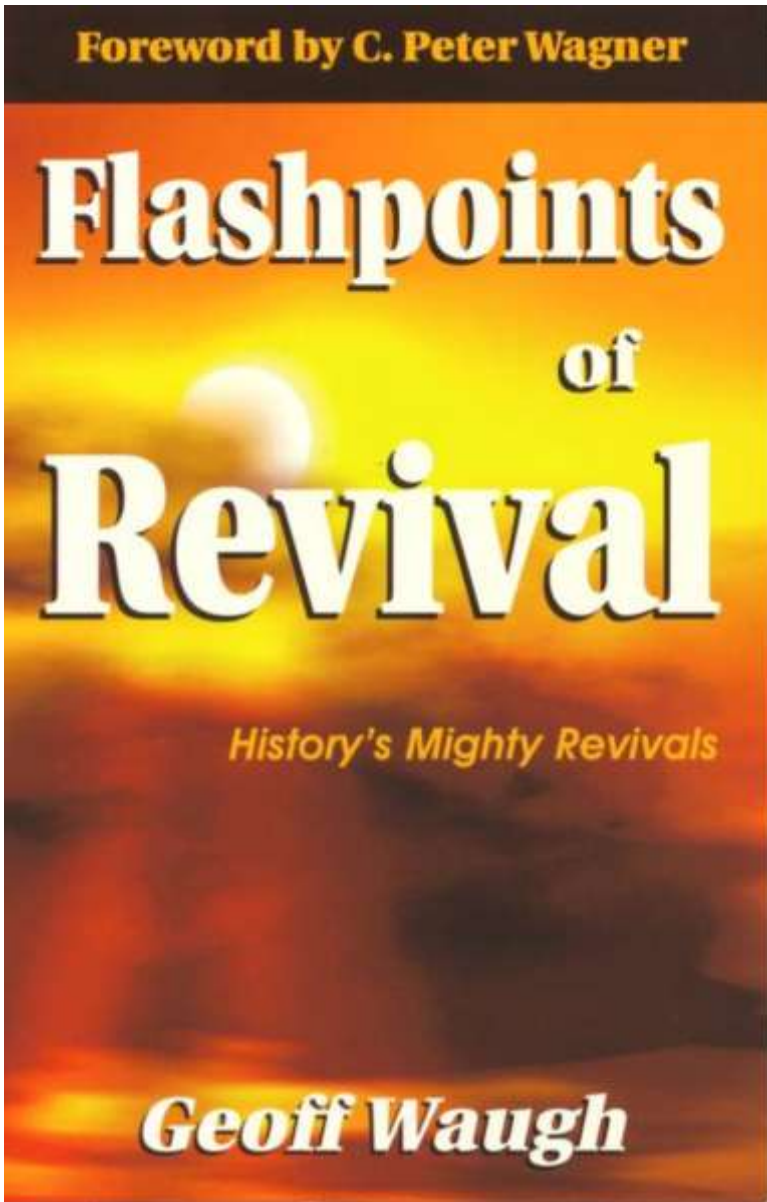
We cannot totally eradicate our cultural biases. An immediate start would be to replace the Golden Rule (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you), with the Platinum Rule (Do unto others as Jesus did unto you).

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*Flashpoints of Revival*  
**History's Mighty Revivals**



### ***3 Women in Ministry***

#### **Sue Fairley**



*Dr Sue Fairley, wrote as the Principal of Trinity Theological College in the Uniting Church in Queensland.*

*Cultural images do not change easily, especially those weighted with the aura of sacred tradition.*

(Carroll, Hargrove and Lummis, 1983:ix)

If there is one sacred tradition that is heavily weighted with the “aura of sacred tradition”, it must surely be leadership within the church and whether women should be part of that leadership – especially in the ordained ministry.

The distribution of positions of formal leadership in the church has become the focus of concern for many women in recent decades. Women have sought – and in some cases obtained – access to the ordained ministry, a leadership position occupied almost entirely by men during most of church history.

Pentecostal and Charismatic women often demonstrated a biblical recovery of women’s leadership in ministry, both as individuals and also in shared ministry leadership either with a husband or in a team. Aimee Semple McPherson led the largest pentecostal church

in the world in the 1920s, built the 5,000 seat Angelus Temple, founded the Foursquare denomination, and raised huge financial and material support for people during the depression and World War II. Kathryn Kuhlman pioneered a new era in healing evangelism from the 1950s. Janet Lancaster, known affectionately as Mother Lancaster, the first Pentecostal pastor in Australia, founded Good News Hall in Melbourne and published *Good News* for 25 years from 1910. Women have pioneered church planting and leadership in missions for over a century, including in Pentecostal missions.

### ***Pentecostal/Charismatic attitudes***

To pick up the perspective of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity I would like to refer to an unpublished report that Susan Hyatt presented to Hyatt International Ministries in Dallas, Texas in March 2001. She suggests that there is no uniform trend in terms of where women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity are heading. Some Pentecostal/Charismatic women are embracing a traditional, subordinate role.

But many others are unwilling to be disobedient to the Holy Spirit by obeying the dictates of distorted Christianity. We are discovering that Jesus taught the equality of men and women in every respect, including substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority. We are uncovering the truth of biblical equality and we are proclaiming it far and wide by every possible means. Nevertheless, we are not driven by such a cause; rather we are seeking to be led by the Spirit in all we do.

Hyatt then shared her own experience as a Pentecostal/Charismatic American woman:

I enjoy unfettered freedom and opportunity to advance the truth of biblical equality. Pentecostal/Charismatic women know in their hearts by the indwelling Holy Spirit that they are equal with men in terms of substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority. However, because of

cultural and religious baggage, most do not know this truth in their heads. This discrepancy between head and heart is the cause of many struggles for Pentecostal/Charismatic women. My job is to give the biblical truth that brings harmony between the heart and the head. My book *In the Spirit we are Equal* presents an historical and biblical argument for gender equality. Others are also advancing this truth among Pentecostal/Charismatic. For example, the leading periodical for women in the movement in America is *Spirit-Led Women*. You will notice a recent lead article "Ten Lies the Church has told Women" by a leading male Pentecostal/Charismatic editor and writer Lee Grady. This is an example of an encouraging partnership that is developing amongst some Pentecostal/Charismatic men and women to bring about biblical equality for women.

In general we are seeing two importance advances. Slowly we are seeing a release from gender-defined roles for women to gift-defined living. And we are seeing a greater sense of egalitarian partnership between men and women. We are seeing an increase in Pentecostal/Charismatic women taking leadership positions in various areas such as communications and the arts, education (including theological education), business and technology, law and government. Pentecostal/Charismatic women are also increasing their influence in dealing with domestic abuse, pastoral counselling and medical concerns (Hyatt 2001).

### **Traditional church attitudes**

The Uniting Church in Australia has practised women's ordination since its inception in 1977. Acceptance of women's ordination is, in fact, one of the "bases of union", indicating that congregations will be accepted into the denomination only if they endorse women's ordination. Persons being ordained within the Uniting Church must also accept that principle.

However, other denominations are still debating the issue and it is causing a great deal of controversy. Before I deal with some of the

issues which face women in ministry today, I will explore some of the issues that have been identified in the literature.

The first issue is *leadership and gender*. In the past two decades the struggle to clarify the foundations for effective leadership in the church has been greatly complicated by the overlay of gender. When social scientists write about differences between men and women, popular culture presumes that these can be translated into gender-based leadership differences. The social science writings by scholars such as Mary Belenky and Carol Gilligan have focussed on the ways in which women differ from men in modes of understanding, psychological development, career paths, and frameworks for ethical decision-making. For many it is a relatively simple leap to presume that gender-based leadership differences exist. From that assumption they then work to develop gender-based *theories* of leadership.

Roels (1997) has explored a variety of gender-based theories of leadership and she believes that we “limit the flexibility of our responses to changing circumstances when we, first of all, label leadership styles as female or male...Every leader, whether male or female should be encouraged to build a full range of leadership strategies and responses...Both male and female leaders must struggle to find a biblical vision for leadership that diligently avoids the pitfalls of gender-based leadership (p.53). This biblical vision is expressed in Scripture passages such as 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul identifies administrative ability as a specific spiritual gift which is not restricted by gender.

A second significant issue is the *controversy over women's ordination* which came to the fore in the last half of the twentieth century. This has occasioned increasing questions have to do with women's roles, female character, and sexuality. However, it was not always like that. Women's leadership in Christianity is a dramatic and complex story.

Jesus himself challenged the social convention of his day and addressed women as equals. Many women were prominent members of his group. During the first and second centuries, when congregations met in homes, women were prominent as leaders.

However, by the third century, the processes of institutionalisation gradually transformed the house churches, with their diversity of leadership functions, into a political body presided over by a monarchical bishop. This spelled the beginning of the end for women in church leadership.

Over the next two centuries, the legitimacy of women's leadership roles was fiercely contested. Opponents of women clergy appealed to a gender ideology that divided society into two domains – the *polis* (city), a male domain – and the *oikos* (household), a female domain. This system gave a great deal of power to women in the household while attempting to segregate them from public, political life. This meant that women exercising leadership in churches were usurping male prerogatives. As the church became increasingly institutionalised during the third and fourth centuries, these arguments carried greater weight (Torjesen, 1993).

Understanding why and how women, once leaders in the Jesus movement and in the early church, were marginalised and scapegoated as Christianity became the state religion is crucial if women are to reclaim their rightful, equal place in the church today.

As the architectural space in which Christians worshipped became a more public space, and as the models for leadership were drawn increasingly from public life, women's leadership became more controversial. Because the public-versus-private gender ideology restricted women's activities in public life, the new leaders of the church were not as comfortable with women's leadership in the churches.

From the fourth century to the twelfth century councils struggled to impose celibacy on the clergy. As Christianity became a state religion and adopted the attitudes toward gender roles of Greco-Roman society, fewer women held church offices. During the medieval period the papacy's struggle to assert its authority over the clergy led to a particularly perverse and destructive construction of female sexuality.

Through the mechanism of the Inquisition a theory of sexuality was created that demonised sexuality by attributing the power of

sexuality to demons. The resulting persecution fell more heavily on women than on men (Torjesen, 1993).

The struggle to impose celibacy on the clergy took more than six centuries! By the sixteenth century there was widespread consensus that the monastic system, which had formed a basic structural element of medieval society, had become corrupt. There was widespread disillusionment with monastic life, but out of this disillusionment there evolved a new theology of sexuality. Its most colourful proponent was Martin Luther, who initiated the German Reformation in the early 1500's with a series of tracts addressed to the common people.

Luther's argument was based on Genesis 1:27 which states that male and female were created in the image of God. If God created the bodies of male and female, then the body is good because it is a bearer of God's image. And if the body is good, then sexuality is good (Schick, 1958). When Luther reflected on Genesis 1:28, God's command to "be fruitful and multiply", he understood that not only was sexuality good, but, more than that, it was a divine ordinance. Therefore, Luther argued, vows of celibacy were contrary to the will of God and priests should be allowed to marry.

In the end, Luther's ideas on marriage and child rearing led to the formation of a new denomination and the split from the Roman Catholic Church. The teachings of the Reformers on sexuality were radical and liberating for women. However, marriage was still seen as patriarchal and women were still deemed inferior to man by nature. When the Protestant reformers, (as they came to be known), abolished monasteries, they enshrined in its place the sanctity of marital sexuality. The new ideal of womanhood became domestic womanhood. The authority and the autonomy of the nun following the religious vocation were undermined. The only true religious role open to women of the Reformation was as a helpmate to a man (Torjesen, 1993).

### **Major cultural shifts**

The reaffirmation of sexuality by the reformers did not restore women to a position of equality with men. It would take many

more centuries for this inequality to be challenged. In fact, it was not until the 1960's and 70's that many of these issues resurfaced and, for the first time, were really challenged. Why did it occur then, and why did so many women choose to enter the ordained ministry as well as many other traditionally male occupations?

Carroll et. al. (1983) suggest that: "What made the 1970's watershed years was the occurrence of *major social and cultural shifts following World War II*, especially during the 1960's, making it possible for women to consider (or press for) ordained ministerial status as a way of responding to God's call" (p.8). It is hard to believe that only in the 1970's did significant numbers of women feel that they were called by God to be ordained. More likely, many women down through the years have experienced a call to the ministry, but have found the opportunity to respond by becoming ordained blocked to them. When ordination was not possible, many of these women expressed their calling to ministry as lay volunteers or in the church-related occupations that allowed women to participate.

Not only has the climate changed to make it possible for women to consider these traditionally all-male professions, but there has also been a *major shift in attitudes about the female role*. Prior to the 1970's, and especially in the 1950's and 60's, a woman's role was to be a good wife and mother. Now it is totally acceptable for women to have both careers and families.

A final major shift that has made it possible for more women to enter the ordained ministry is the *sharply declining birth rate*. Since the early 1960's this has allowed women the freedom to explore career options that childrearing responsibilities previously precluded. This has meant that many women pursue ministry studies in their mid to late thirties and forties.

However, the shift that has allowed women to respond to a call to ordained ministry does not guarantee that other clergy will accept women into the profession. Neither does it guarantee that they will experience theological education in the same way as their male colleagues.

## Women and Theological Education

Getting denominations to accept the ordination of women was one thing but changing the way women experienced theological education was a different matter. This is another significant issue. A quick review of the literature in this field will demonstrate this. In 1980 the Cornwall Collective, composed of women who were working in ongoing projects within theological education, published a book titled *Your Daughters shall Prophesy: Feminist Alternatives in Theological Education*, outlining feminist criticisms of theological education and proposing some basic revisions, including some alternative forms of theological education. The Cornwall Collective criticized theological education for its division of theory and practice, its organization of disciplines, its reliance on claims of “objectivity”, and its use of the model of university education, which lack any concern for integration or spirituality. They called for theological education to be more holistic, more aware of its political nature, more community oriented.

Five years later, the Mud Flower Collective produced *God's Fierce Whimsy*, a book dedicated to “help” theological education, because the authors of the book found that theological colleges are “arenas in which lukewarm truth and uninspired scholarship are peddled” (p.204). The Mud Flower Collective offers much the same analysis of theological education as does the Cornwall Collective (Chopp, 1995).

The difference between the 1980 Cornwall Collective and the 1985 Mud Flower Collective could be interpreted as revealing increasing frustration at the inability to get feminist issues heard within theological education. This increased frustration, suggests Chopp (1995), identifies as problematic the very same issues that the Cornwall Collective found prohibitive to good theological education. The Mud Flower Collective cites such issues as the politics of education, the role of cultural pluralism, the standards of excellence, the relation of theory and praxis, the role of community, the claims of validity in scholarship, and the structure of theological reflection as the problems for women in theological education.

Thus, the problems of women and for women in theological



education are not merely women's historical lack of participation, but how theological education is defined, formed and structured. Once a critical mass of women appeared in theological education, problems of the structure, purpose, and nature of theological education became more and more evident (Chopp, 1993).

This critical mass of women began to appear in many theological colleges around the world in the 1980s. As Chopp (1993) points out, once the students in theological education were white, young, and male, largely from working or middle-class backgrounds. Raised in the church, many aspired to serve God and become religious practitioners. Now these subjects are few and far between in our theological colleges. Many of the subjects today are women and men who are older and who have not been raised in the church. Lifestyle differences, theological pluralism, and cultural diversity are apparent in the student body of most theological colleges.

Women in theological colleges discovered very quickly that they were affirmed when they indicated a calling toward areas of service that parallel those assigned to the female by Western culture, while they were gently discouraged when they indicated they had other goals such as the ordained ministry. It takes courage to cross culturally established boundaries, and so many women put off "the call" as long as possible hoping it might go away.

The Old Testament provides many examples of people who struggled with the reality of their call to the service of God and the nature of that call. Women can certainly identify with that struggle. Behind them is a long tradition of the suppression of women's gifts, and surrounding them sometimes is an atmosphere of questioning and suspicion. With few role models women often fight a lonely battle.

The years spent in theological college provide an opportunity for women to think and evaluate but not all women find that experience a helpful one. Some women found that on the whole, male faculty were warm and friendly, but some felt that male faculty were patronizing. It seems as if male faculty were more inclined to treat women seriously if they were academically superior. There was also concern expressed about the selection of

textbooks and set readings that tended to be mostly written by male scholars, even though in many fields now there are renowned female scholars.

One of the most common complaints from women is the lack of women faculty. It is still rare to find women faculty members in teaching positions such as theology. This is true in my own experience – I am the only female on our faculty and my area is Christian education. Some women also felt that there is not enough being done in theological colleges to confront both men and women with the sex stereotypes that influence their thinking and acting.

A great deal of research is being done and pressure is mounting to make theological education a more inclusive experience.

In 1997 Kathleen Hughes was asked to present a paper at a meeting of Theological Schools in America addressing these questions: What changes can we expect from a program of theological studies? Is the student potential for change boundless or is it actually quite limited? Is it possible that in a course of studies students moves from very narrow and rigid viewpoints to broader understandings of the tradition of the church and so on? In considering the classroom as the locus of conversion of a person's beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, values, viewpoints and perspectives, what is helpful in effecting such change?

Hughes (1997) found from her research with exiting women students that the change that happened in them was that all had learned to trust their own human and religious experience as valid and true. Further, they claimed that their intellects were stretched and their powers of discernment were sharpened. "Women regularly have a difficult adjustment to theological studies when they experience themselves as simultaneously a subtle threat to others even while they have little personal self-confidence that they can do theology, learn a new theological vocabulary, and so on. Each of these women said she began her studies wondering 'Can I do it?'" (Hughes, 1997:5).

Many of the women also indicated similar questioning and doubt. "I am struck by what an awesome responsibility it is and wonder if I

am equal to the task.” “I am deeply grateful to the faculty for their affirmation and belief in my call.”

These women actually helped each other to accept their own potentiality. As women students realised that faculty respected them and their opinions, and fellow male students were willing to dialogue with them as equals, their confidence grew. In our college many of the women students are actually the highest achievers.

### **General issues facing women in ministry today**

Let's turn now to some of the issues that face women in ministry today as we commence this new millennium. I would like to use a Scripture passage as the basis for my comments. It is from Numbers 13:1-2, 17-20, 25-28.

This report of the spies to Moses is one of the earliest “good news – bad news” stories on record. I will use this passage to highlight some good news and some bad news in relation to issues that women in ministry are facing. We will use the terms “milk and honey” and “giants” to represent the good and bad news respectively.

#### ***Milk and Honey: The land now shows many positive aspects.***

1. Women who have entered the ordained ministry are generally dedicated and competent individuals who have a strong sense of calling to serve God this way. In the past many of these women would have had to be content to serve as highly committed laity, frustrated perhaps, but resigned to their exclusion from the ranks of the ordained.
2. The situation of women being a curiosity in theological colleges has changed dramatically and most recently graduates found their experience of theological college to be positive. That is certainly true in my research.
3. The job market has improved although there are still some problems. The positive aspects deserve highlighting. Most recent women graduates have not found difficulty obtaining a placement and they have not been sent to declining congregations.
4. As women enter parish positions they are functioning competently as pastors and many have found that males who were

not happy to have a woman minister in the beginning have changed their attitudes once they saw that the person was competent. Fears that having a clergywoman would bring on decline in the congregation are not supported.

5. Generally lay leaders have favourable experiences when their congregation is served by a woman pastor. This has had a spin-off effect for other women pastors.

6. Most women in ministry report generally positive relationships with other male clergy and church officials.

***Giants: However, the land is not all flowing with milk and honey.***

1. Clergywomen still face obstacles to their full participation in the ordained ministry of the church. In almost every instance of “good news” we could probably find a corresponding negative note. Women are less likely than men to be encouraged by either their parents or pastors to consider the ordained ministry. Cultural stereotypes continue to operate and deprive women of needed support at an important time of personal decision making.

2. In relation to the job market, there are still some giants to be overcome. The resistance of some church officials to women clergy in key leadership roles ranges from polite neutrality to refusal to allow women to participate.

3. There are still some lay people who struggle to accept women clergy and if they are the key leaders of the congregation, it can mean that a woman pastor will not be called to that church.

4. Single ordained women face some particular obstacles particularly in relation to suitable appointments. Many of the rural congregations find it more difficult to accept a woman – let alone a single woman. Single women clergy also often suffer from loneliness because of the lack of support from a spouse.

5. One of the biggest difficulties for married women clergy is the balancing of home, marriage and career. The temptation to be “superwoman” is strong. Some women feel that they have to conform to a higher set of expectations than men do. Even in more “modern” marriages where couples have worked to overcome traditional sex-role distinctions, combining fulltime ministry and motherhood poses a problem for a large number of clergywomen.

6. Linked with this is the problem of the spouses work commitment. Often this limits the possibilities of placement.

7. There is still the persistence of sexism in the churches as well as the culture, although now perhaps they are more subtle. For example articles written about the ordained ministry which only use the male pronoun; lists of successful clergy which are all male; typecasting women into particular kinds of clergy positions.
8. Climate of anxiety among lay people in relation to declining membership and the future of the church. This anxiety fosters a resistance to any innovation which might be suspected of further endangering the already fragile institution – women clergy are still seen by some as an innovation.
9. Resistance from the male clergy – some still believe that they are the only ones who should be ordained. The “sacredly masculine” image of the clergy is hard to shake!
10. The exercise of authority – the doctrine of the “priesthood of all believers” emphasises that ministry belongs equally to all Christians, although clergy have special functions for which they are set apart. These functions include preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments etc. Clergy perform their special functions of ministry to enable laity to perform their ministry. Sometimes this can lead to a blurring of lines of authority which makes it difficult for any clergy person, but sometimes it is more difficult for women clergy, particularly if they have some very strong lay people in their congregations.
11. There are not many appropriate female leadership models or mentors although this is improving now that some women have been ordained for quite a long period of time.
12. A challenge for Pentecostal/Charismatic women (according to Hyatt, 2001) is the process of renewing their minds in the knowledge that they are equal with men. Changing the mind is one of the greatest struggles we all face. What we think about women determines our behaviour in relation to womanhood.

How can we begin to overcome “the giants” and reach the promised land?

I want to mention three ways in which Tillich suggests the church has exercised leadership in social change.

1. *Silent interpenetration.* Women clergy in some denominations are now becoming what we could call a critical mass. Their silent or

not so silent interpenetration of the church's ordained ministry should reduce the present inequities and overcome some of the obstacles to full acceptance of women clergy.

2. *Prophetic criticism.* Active, vocal advocates both women and men, for full acceptance of women as ordained ministers are crucial if the process of change is not to be interminably slow. Advocates are needed to ensure the representation of women in positions of leadership within the denomination.

3. *Direct political power.* The present situation of clergywomen can be considerably helped if clergywomen are better prepared for the situations that face them as ordained pastors. Women need to understand the "land" they are trying to occupy. They need to have a realistic picture of what the current situation of ordained ministry is like. This needs to include an understanding of what the job situation for clergy is in their denomination, what salaries are reasonable to expect, how to use the denomination system and how it works. There is a better understanding of power and the political process within congregations. What are appropriate leadership styles in dealing with situations for which they are very few cultural models for women?

If these and other issues can be addressed then women will not merely have reached the promised land of full acceptance into ordained ministry. They will have contributed to the quality of life in that "land" for all who occupy it.

## **Conclusion**

Returning to the passage from Numbers we know that the people did not occupy the land that flowed with milk and honey for a long time because they were too afraid of the giants that dwelt there. However, there were two spies who were courageous enough to encourage the people to overcome their fears – Joshua and Caleb. We can all be like Joshua and Caleb and encourage women to enter the promised land and with the help of the Lord to overcome whatever giants they might meet along the way.

Susan Hyatt (2001) points the way to this promised land:

There is no reason why, in this era of Pentecostal/Charismatic outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, that we should succumb to religion. We must realise that the Spirit of God does not come to confirm that what we believe about everything is right and that what other Christians believe is wrong. Rather, the Spirit comes to help us in our human weakness, to empower us, to comfort us. *And the Spirit comes to guide us into all truth!* That is to say, the Spirit comes to open our understanding and to help us change the way we think.

To continue with our analogy, that may be our giant that we need to confront. It is my prayer that we will allow the Spirit of God to change the way we think about ourselves as women and men so that we can think of ourselves in the same way that Jesus did.

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Susan Hyatt's report, quoted in this article, is given in full in the following article, "Women and Religions".



## ***4 Women and Religions***

### **Susan Hyatt**



*This report by Dr Susan Hyatt, describes her participation as a Pentecostal/charismatic women's representative at the Colloque Femmes et Religions (Women and Religions Colloquium) in Brussels, Belgium on 11 March, 2001. The Colloquium was organized by Hervé Hasquin, Ministre-Président of the Government of the French Community of Wallonie-Brussels, Belgium. Susan is the author of In the Spirit we're Equal.*

On February 21, 2001, I received an unexpected invitation from the President of the French Community of Belgium to be a scholarly voice for American Pentecostal Women at a one-day colloquium in Brussels on Women and Religions.

Since I have no desire to travel and since I am fully occupied with ministry at home, my first inclination was to decline. But as I sought the Lord, it became clear that this was not a luxurious privilege being afforded me. It was, rather, a responsibility that he would have me assume. So I agreed to go. I still held a secret hope that I would not be able to go because I did not have a valid

passport. But when the Canadian Consulate in Dallas was willing to expedite the process in record time, I was left without excuse!

Obviously, the Lord had opened wide an effectual door for me in Europe and I would go as the single voice of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. On Friday morning, March 9, I flew from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, just a stone's throw from home. After 11 hours in the air, I arrived in Brussels on Saturday morning in time to adjust to the 7-hour time difference and attend the reception that evening.

### **The site of the event**

As a guest of the Belgium government, I was treated like an ambassador. They provided splendid accommodations in Le Plaza Hotel, the site of the colloquium.

Renovated in 1976, this exquisite 5-star hotel provided luxurious surroundings for the event. Its classic banquet room was the site of the Saturday evening reception. Several breakout rooms, equipped with translation booths for English, Dutch, and German, accommodated our round-table discussions on Sunday morning. That afternoon, the 900-seat theater-television studio was filled to capacity for the 5-hour televised debate.

The colloquium was the idea of M. Hervé Hasquin, Ministre-Président of the Government of the French Community of Wallonie-Brussels, Belgium. Motivation for this intercultural dialogue came, in part, in response to the United Nations' designation of 2001 as "The Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations." A personal representative of the Secretary-General at the UN Information Center in Brussels carried greetings to the assembly.

The precise date of the colloquium, March 11, was chosen to coincide with the UN's "Day of the Woman" (March 8).

The site of the event was strategic. Brussels is the headquarters of NATO, the capital of Belgium, and the capital of the new United States of Europe. In this age of globalization, what happens in Brussels ultimately affects the entire world.

In calling this “grand international colloquium,” M. Hasquin provided an important platform for Europe and the world to hear about the status and concerns of women from women of the world’s major religious groups.

### **The participants**

Forty women from 20 nations participated in the colloquium. Of these, 9 represented Christianity, 15 for Islam; and 8 for Judaism. Three were agnostics, one a Hindu, and 2 were Buddhists. Two were simply listed as “other.”

The nine Christian women came from six different nations, including France, Belgium, Rwanda, Peru, Chili, and the United States (yours truly). Several were theology or history professors. One was a social anthropologist in South America. Chantal, an executive member of the African Alliance of the YMCA from Rwanda, explained that many in her nation have left Christianity as a result of the horrendous war. Indeed, how can “Christians” justify such racial and tribal hatred?

The most alive and friendly of the Christian women was “Sister” Noëlle Hausman, Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Belgium. She had entered the convent at 15 years of age by special permission of Léon Joseph Cardinal Seunens, the outstanding Belgian leader of the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal. I asked Noëlle if this meant that she were Charismatic, to which she replied, “Oh, no! I am afraid!” This, of course, opened the door for me to assure her of God’s love for her!

Generally speaking, the Moslem women tended to be strong, intelligent, and aggressive. Certainly, they were very different from the veiled Islamic women we see in American supermarkets! But I noticed that whenever I would pass by Hawa from Djibouti, she would draw her headcovering more securely over her head and face.

The eight Jewish women were typically confident and conversant. Some were history of religions professors. Others were leaders of national Jewish women’s organizations and directors of Jewish cultural centres. One high profile theologian from Germany, Ruth

Lapide, once travelled America with her theologian husband teaching the Jewish background of the Gospels. She now works on ethical issues with the German government and has a German television program promoting the Bible.

Of the other women, three were agnostics: a professor of History of Religions at the Free University of Brussels, a secular feminist who is the French Community's Director of the Office of Equal Opportunities, and the third was Belgium's Minister of State.

The lone Hindu representative was the Director of the Centre for the Study of Social Development at J. Nehru University in New Delhi. Two others were Buddhist nuns, while two did not state religious preference, one a dancer and choreographer and the other a Tajikistan-born film-maker living in France.

### **The program**

The program was conducted in French with translation into English, Dutch, and German. Although I am quite proficient in reading and writing French, unfortunately my speaking and listening/comprehension skills leave much to be desired! Even with the voice of good translators coming through my headset, I feel I missed much of what was being said!

On Sunday morning, we were divided into four round table discussion groups facilitated by TV news anchors and professional journalists. One group discussed the history of women in the various religions. Another group discussed the place and status of women in the different religions. A third group discussed the ways that religious women express themselves in their various cultures. Of the 10 participants in this group, none were Christians.

The fourth group, the one to which I was assigned, dealt with "where are we and where are we going." Since the emphasis was political, the ambassador and cabinet ministers were part of this group.

After a brief lunch break, we convened to the theatre for the live, televised debate. I was impressed with the ornate theatre and I was surprised by the enthusiastic crowd of 900 men and women who

had gathered for the event. I detected among these Europeans a greater concern and more genuine caring for women than I have observed in America!

As the debate opened, we were challenged to consider certain “underpinning principles” in the relationship between women and religion. These 5 basic opposing elements that exist together within each religion and that are common to all world religions, include the following:

1. All religions contain myths that posit the liberation of women against patriarchal militancy.
2. All religions claim texts that propose gender equality and texts that are gender-restrictive.
3. All religions display power struggles between male superiority, on the one hand, and so-called “mystical movements” ascribing equality, on the other.
4. Fundamentalism in all religions legalistically dictates that men must dominate while feminism calls for the creation of what is new, stating that the patriarchal text of fundamentalism is not appropriate.
5. Religion is seen as an obstacle to women’s liberation, yet religion often is the place where women find liberty.

### **The voices of women**

Although I am aware of the injustices and inequities that women around the world are suffering, simply because they are women, what the various women shared served to remind and further inform me. Here is some of what I heard.

In Djibouti, most women are still illiterate. Women do not have equal educational opportunities and poverty continues to stifle any hope of progress toward a better life. Although genital mutilation has been outlawed, the practice continues.

In Algeria, access to education and increased civic power are seen

as the only means by which women can combat the persecution and suffering they are experiencing under the Islamic fundamentalist regime. The Algerians have a saying, "Paradise is under the feet of women," to which a well-educated Algerian refugee woman responded, "Then lift your foot, please!"

In Niger, more than 9 out of 10 women cannot read. The Islamic fundamentalism of Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, through the power of oil money, is gaining increased control. Many women simply accept this, refusing to take responsibility for their personal development and settling instead for submission according to the family code of Islam. This whole situation is contributing to the suffering of women in many ways. Girls are no longer permitted education. Women are required to "adore their husbands" and are no longer allowed to be "fashionable," but must wear veils and long dresses. The Ambassador noted that women must take personal responsibility for improving their condition. In her opinion, the future of Africa is in the hands of women. Unfortunately, many who have the education to run for government positions no longer have the economic means to do so.

Melika Bosnawi, Islamic representative from Bosnia-Herzegovina, unleashed intense anger during the TV debate regarding the horrendous war crimes against Moslem women in her land. These atrocities, of which most of us are aware, reflect badly on Christendom.

The Minister of Culture of Senegal proclaimed, "Mohammed came and brought liberty to women!" The problem, she explained, is that few women in her nation can read and thereby interpret the Islamic texts in terms that would bring the equality that Mohammed intended.

Princess Maria Theresa, a Moslem and highly educated social scientist, said, "Equality of women represents the future."

Hinduism, explained Madhu Kishwar, teaches a principle of feminine energy, a positive creative force which produces wealth. This leads to the possibility of two different kinds of women. One is a benevolent consort who is attached to a male and the other is a strong woman who is unattached to a male. She is understood to be

seeking her own interests and men are expected to bow to her. Within the family structure, mothers and mothers-in-law can become commanding, even oppressive, figures while younger women are marginalized. There is a definite preference for male children. Girls are deprived of education and life expectancy is low. Interestingly, any progress towards bettering the life of women appears to be coming from the initiatives of men.

In Judaism, women are free and can enjoy independence both economically and socially. Today Jewish women tend to seek responsibility in the community. They are demanding a rereading of the texts that have been used to force them into secondary social and religious roles. Inequity in divorce is a concern since it is producing hardship for Jewish women in some nations.

As Chile makes a transition to democracy, human rights issues are coming to the forefront, but there is no women's movement. Roman Catholicism is the majority religion which means that women are to be subject to men and socially secondary. In 1989, the government instituted a Ministry of Women's Affairs, but women are still second class citizens. Divorce is not allowed. "Women work but men still rule," said the Chilean representative.

In Peru, it was noted, Christian evangelism allegedly lowered the status of women in society. Now, with the re-establishment of Peruvian culture, two things are happening: 1. Women are emerging in areas of leadership; 2. Native religions are being restored.

**SUMMARY:** It can be said that women, regardless of religion or culture, continue to struggle and suffer in ways that men do not simply because they are women. Illiteracy and lack of educational opportunities remain hindrances to progress. Religious fundamentalism is seen as restrictive and sexist. Many expressed the need for equity in divorce because of the hardship that comes on women who experience this tragedy. Several women noted that women themselves must take personal responsibility for equality with men, regardless of their religious affiliation or current cultural climate.

## **M. Hervé Hasquin's Observations**

In closing the debate, M. Hervé Hasquin, who also serves as a History Professor, summarized what he had heard the women say by making 8 observations.

1. The history of women and religions is a history of the silencing of women. It is time to break that silence. This is possible only in the context of political democracy.

In history, religion has always been a way of asserting ones identity when freedoms are denied. 2. Women seek refuge in religion.

3. Women tend to be in denial regarding the restrictions placed on them by religion.

4. Religion can be liberating for women, but restrictions normally arise based in tradition and fundamentalist expressions of that religion. Every case is unique but the economic and social context remains an influence on women's freedom.

5. When women experience advancement toward equality, men tend to feel deprived and to exhibit the need to return to those things that are certain. This gives rise to an increase in religious fundamentalism, which is perceived as a necessary defence against revolution.

6. In evaluating history we must be modest. The writing of history is a constant rewriting because the questions we ask in writing history are informed by our own context and we therefore search history on the basis of context-driven questions.

7. Ultimately, a person's relationship to faith is a personal issue.

8. The number of women in the colloquium from different backgrounds enabled all to express themselves without imposing their position on others.

M. Hasquin's final statement—his thesis, if you like—was that, in his informed opinion, in spite of its imperfections, the concept of separation of church and state remains fundamentally the best way



to organize society.

I had carried with me a copy each of Eddie's book (*2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*), my book (*In the Spirit We're Equal*), and my teaching manual (*The Spirit, The Bible, and Women—A Revival Perspective*). As M. Hasquin was presenting his closing remarks, I felt that I should give him these copies. He graciously and enthusiastically accepted them.

### **My contribution**

Generally, throughout the day, the voice of the Christians seemed to me to be dull and inconsequential. One Protestant representative was almost shouted down at one point, but she rebounded with, "Just because I am a Protestant doesn't mean I should not be able to express my mind!"

Personally, I felt no such opposition. It seems, perhaps, that most of the people present did not know what a Pentecostal/Charismatic was and therefore, at least out of curiosity, gave ear to what I said.

The assignment given me was to state briefly "where we are and where we are going" as women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity. We know that a uniform trend is not obvious. Many Pentecostal-Charismatic women are embracing a traditional, subordinate role. But many, like myself, are unwilling to be disobedient to the Holy Spirit by obeying the dictates of distorted Christianity. We are discovering that Jesus taught the equality of men and women in every respect, including substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority. We are uncovering the truth of biblical equality and we are proclaiming it far and wide by every possible means. Nevertheless, we are not driven by such a cause; rather, we are seeking to be led by the Spirit in all that we do. Following, then, is what I shared during the colloquium.

During the round table discussion, I was free to say whatever I wanted to say, and I had a clear sense of what that needed to be.

The moderator immediately opened the door for me to make a clear statement of the Gospel by asking me to define “Pentecostalism.” In the entire event, no one else was asked to clarify their “religion.” Again, at the conclusion of the round table, the moderator reminded me to reiterate the definition of “Pentecostalism” in the TV debate. In fact, his first question to me in the debate was, “What is “Pentecostalism?”

Here, in essence, is what I said.

“A ‘Pentecostal-Charismatic’ is a believer who has a born-again experience with Jesus Christ and an ongoing, dynamic experience of the presence and power of His Holy Spirit in life.

“In the history of Christianity, there have been 2 streams: Institutional Christianity and Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity. The institutional stream. has always tended to be hierarchical and to restrict women. The Pentecostal/Charismatic stream has always tended toward egalitarian relationships and equality for women.

“Due to the 20<sup>th</sup> century global explosion of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, there are now 600 million Pentecostal-Charismatics worldwide. In the United States, 20% of women profess to be Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians.

“As a Pentecostal-Charismatic woman in America, I enjoy unfettered freedom and opportunity to advance the truth of biblical equality. Pentecostal/Charismatic women know in their hearts by the indwelling Holy Spirit that they are equal with men in terms of substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority. However, because of cultural and religious baggage, most do not know this truth in their heads. This discrepancy between head and heart is the cause of many struggles for Pentecostal-Charismatic women. My job is to give the biblical truth that brings harmony between the head and heart.

“To this end, my husband and I teach, write, and operate a publishing company. His first major book, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*, [I held it up for all to see] validates the existence of the Pentecostal/Charismatic stream of Christianity as opposed to the institutional stream. My book, *In the Spirit We're*

*Equal*, and course [I held them up for all to see] present an historical and biblical argument for gender equality.

“Others are also advancing this truth among Pentecostal/Charismatics. For example, the leading periodical for women in the movement in America is *SpiritLed Women* [I held up a copy for all to see]. You will notice a recent lead article entitled “10 Lies the Church Has Told Women” by a leading male Pentecostal/Charismatic editor and writer, Lee Grady. This is an example of an encouraging partnership that is developing among some Pentecostal/Charismatic men and women to bring about biblical equality for women.

“Also serving in various ways to advance the truth of equality throughout the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement are 2 different organizations: Christians for Biblical Equality and the Society for Pentecostal Studies.

“In general, we are seeing 2 important advancements. Slowly we are seeing a release from gender-defined roles for women to gift-defined living. And we are seeing a greater sense of egalitarian partnership between men and women.

“We are seeing an increase in Pentecostal/Charismatic women taking leadership positions in various areas such as communication and the arts, education (including theological education), business and technology, law and government. Pentecostal/Charismatic women are also increasing their influence in dealing with domestic abuse, pastoral counselling, and medical concerns.

“The one great stronghold of inequality among Pentecostal/Charismatic believers is the home. I, for one, am working to bring the equality Jesus taught to this important area.”

## **The TV Debate**

During the TV Debate, the moderator asked me 3 questions.

*Question 1.* What is a “Pentecostal/Charismatic”?

*My Answer.* “A Pentecostal-Charismatic is a believer who has a born-again experience with Jesus Christ and an ongoing, dynamic experience of the presence and power of His Holy Spirit in life.

“In the history of Christianity, there have been 2 streams: Institutional Christianity and Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity. The institutional stream has always tended to be hierarchical and to restrict women. The Pentecostal/Charismatic stream has always tended toward egalitarian relationships and equality for women.

“Due to the 20<sup>th</sup> century global explosion of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, there are now 600 million P/Cs worldwide. In the United States, 20% of women profess to be Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians.”

*Question 2.* What is the greatest area of struggle for Pentecostal/Charismatic women?

*My Answer.* “The greatest struggle for Pentecostal/Charismatic women is the process of renewing their minds in the knowledge that they are equal with men. Changing the mind is one of the greatest struggles we all encounter, and I would say that this is the crux of the struggle for both men and women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, whether they realize it or not! What we think about women determines our behaviour in relation to womanhood.”

*Question 3.* George W. Bush, a professing Christian, has just been elected president of the United States. What is the position of Pentecostal/Charismatic women in relation to liberal and conservative, Democratic and Republican politics?

*My Answer.* “That is a question I do not feel I can answer adequately. I am a citizen of Heaven and a citizen of Canada who is privileged to reside in the United States. I know several Pentecostal/Charismatic women who are active at various levels in the political arena, but I am not adequately versed in that subject to be able to answer your question.”

## Reflections

I have been listening to the Lord about why he had me there and what he would have me learn, say, or do as a result. Here are a few thoughts.

1. Christian women need to shake off the shackles of religion masquerading as biblical Christianity. So much of what is taught about womanhood among Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians is no different from what is taught in various other religions. For example, the idea of male authoritative rulership and female subordination, servanthood, and subjugation is a characteristic of religion. It is not a legitimate principle of biblical, Spirit-filled Christianity.
2. The favour of man over woman is typical of religion, but not of Jesus.
3. Spirit-filled women must take personal responsibility to develop their abilities, gifts, and talents, including their intellectual ability through educational opportunities. This is a responsibility, not a privilege, and must not be left to men alone.
4. Women in all religions are struggling because of doctrines that teach the primacy of the male. Marriage is, perhaps, the main stronghold of inequity. Divorce that favours men seems to be a global problem.
5. Women in all religions have gender-defined roles that provide them with social power of some sort. This social structure inevitably produces a climate of manipulation by women which produces power for a few and hopeless depression for many.

There is no reason why, in this era of Pentecostal/Charismatic outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, that we should succumb to religion. We must realize that the Spirit of God does not come to confirm that what we believe about everything is right and that what other Christians believe is wrong. Rather, the Spirit comes to help us in our human weakness, to empower us, to comfort us. *And the Spirit comes to guide us into all truth!* That is to say, the Spirit comes to open our understanding and to help us change the way we think.

It is my prayer that we will allow the Spirit of God to change the way we, who profess to be “Spirit-Filled” Christians, think about womanhood. May we shed our *religious* thinking and think about womanhood *the way Jesus wants us to think!* According to the Gospels, accurately interpreted, that means thinking of women as equal with men in terms of substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority.

### **An overlooked mission field**

In my brief encounter with the French Community of Wallonie-Brussels in the new European Union, I sensed the dynamic power that always seems to accompany a new venture. The EU is in its formative years. It is looking ahead to what it can become. It is searching for the best way to order its society. This is refreshing! But are Spirit-filled Christians as aware and alert to the need and to the opportunity. Europe has had enough of the Christian religion. Now they must see Jesus!

I have often said that many Christians will go to the ends of the earth to reach the uneducated masses. This is good! But will they go next door to reach the educated feminist who is turned off by patriarchal Christian religion? I have no doubt that the EU’s French community in Belgium is genuinely concerned about women—including the feminist—and about what role religion should play in advancing the equality of women in their state and the emerging European Union. What a place for the Presence of God through people who can rub shoulders with the decision-makers!

Regardless of the teaching of some Christian prophecy teachers regarding the EU, perhaps the Church should embrace the fact that something that will influence the future is, in fact, emerging in Europe. And instead of smugly dismissing the EU as an emerging evil empire, perhaps we should dismiss our own stagnation and take a lesson from our European friends.

Perhaps we should examine American Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and realize that our methods need to be brought back to the standard and means of Jesus Christ. The fruit of our authority structures and spiritual formation methods reek of religion and have little scent of Heaven!

Perhaps we should be less concerned about music and entertainment, about flamboyant preachers with extra-biblical theologies. Perhaps we should be less concerned about funding TV programs and building cathedrals and networks of personal power.

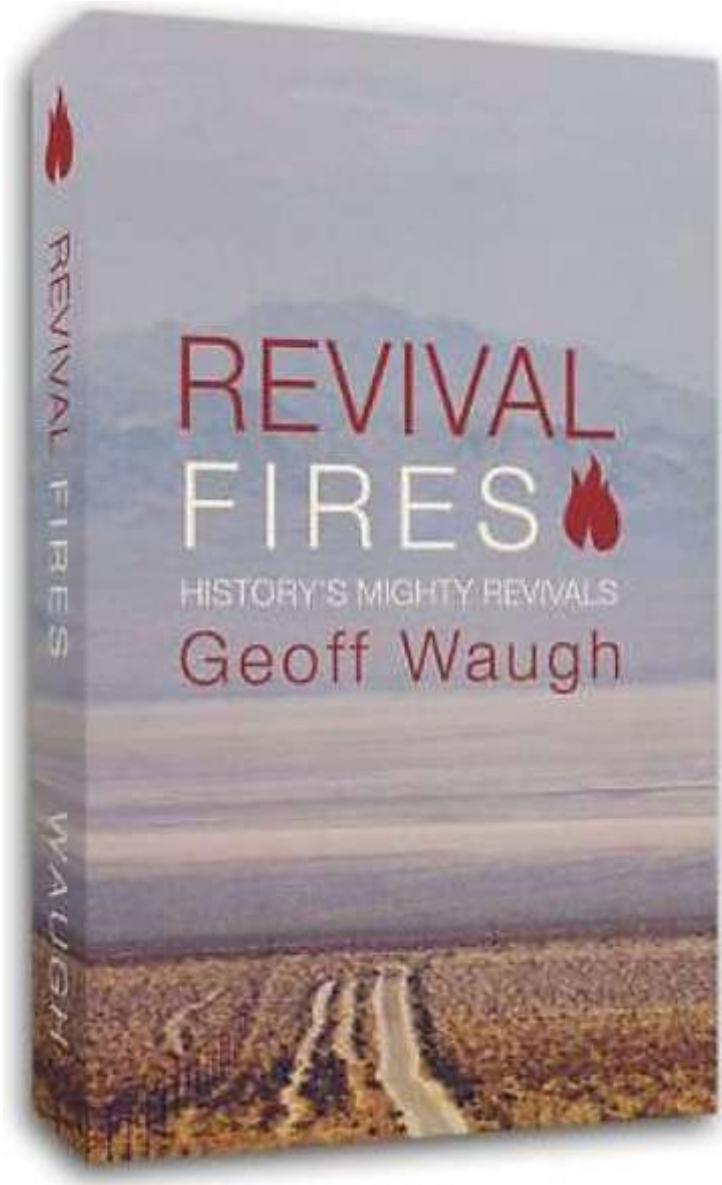
I have no doubt that the Lord wants us to purge the message we teach and preach so that it comes into line with the Message of Jesus. I have no doubt that the only means the Lord would have us use is the power of the Holy Spirit. Everything else is secondary and superfluous—and often a hindrance.

I hope this report has troubled you, challenged you, and inspired you! And perhaps Mary's words in John 2:5 can take on new significance for each of us: "Whatever He [Jesus] says to you, do it!"

If you would like to know what I am doing and become a part of it as the Spirit leads, please, let me know. And if you are reading this and are already taking action, I would be interested to know who you are and what you are doing.

Susan's book, *In the Spirit We're Equal*, is reviewed in this issue of the *Renewal Journal*. Her husband Eddie's book, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*, was reviewed in Issue 12 of the *Renewal Journal*. These books and other resources are available from them at Hyatt International Ministries - [www.eddiehyatt.com](http://www.eddiehyatt.com).

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## *5 Disciple-Makers*

**By Mark Setch**



Rev Dr Mark Setch adapted this article from his research for his Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary titled “Developing Disciple-Makers: Reclaiming our Call to be an Apostolic Disciple-Making Church.”

Before ascending into heaven the Risen Christ gave his disciples a commission. They were to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). Within the Acts of the Apostles, Luke records the results of the early church’s obedience to Jesus’ commission. As people sent into the world by Jesus, they made disciples. The early church grew because those disciples in turn made more disciples, who made more disciples.

At the beginning of the third millennium the mainline denominational church is in crisis. Over the last twenty years membership has been in decline. In recent years this decline has become more significant. Declining numbers lead many commentators to conclude that our world in its twenty-first century is post-Christian; they allege the Christian church has outlived its usefulness and has no prominent place in a postmodern world. There is, however, growing evidence to suggest that this conclusion is inaccurate. Alongside the declining mainline church, there is an emerging twenty-first century church which is vital, dynamic,

healthy, and growing.

Why are some churches growing while others are fading into oblivion? It is my conviction that declining churches are those in which the Great Commission has lost its power. Going into the world is no longer a priority. Instead, the evangelistic focus (if one exists) is that of inviting people to come and be a part of the congregation. The problem is that fewer people are accepting the invitation. Mission is often framed by covert concerns which seek to protect the church from being infiltrated by the culture of our postmodern world. Consequently, the culture of the church is usually set apart and distinct from the culture of the world in which people live, work, and recreate.

For many unchurched members of our population, there appears to be little reason or relevance to include the church as a central part of life. Even though life includes pain and struggle, and a desperate search for hope and meaning, the established church is generally not perceived as providing answers to life's questions. Furthermore, disciple-making within these churches is not perceived as being the responsibility of everyday Christians. It is perceived to be the responsibility of ordained clergy, leaders, and those who are more evangelistically inclined. Disciples are no longer making disciples, who in turn make more disciples.

On the other hand, healthy and dynamic churches are those in which the Great Commission has reclaimed its power. Evangelism is given a high priority. Rather than being focused on trying to get people into the church, the vision of these congregations is to take their church into the world. The mission of these congregations is driven by the challenge of incarnating the timeless gospel of Jesus Christ into the culture of our postmodern world. In other words, they are functioning as apostolic (sent) churches. Disciple-making is not the responsibility of a select few. Every Christian is called to make disciples, who are disciple-makers; therefore disciples multiply. These churches develop apostolic disciple-making congregations.

This paper articulates a call for the Church of Jesus Christ to reclaim

the Great Commission and become an apostolic disciple-making church. Such a church will enter the postmodern twenty-first century world and develop disciple-makers. For many people this represents a new and different paradigm for understanding and experiencing both church and discipleship. It involves a paradigm shift which is essential if local church congregations and denominations are to become a healthy and vibrant part of the emerging church of the twenty-first century.

In order to illustrate the facets of this paradigm shift, this paper will be divided into three sections. Firstly, I will present a disciple-making theology of discipleship. Secondly I will present a disciple-making theology of the church. Finally I will describe some of the current research into growing vital churches, concluding that this research in fact supports an apostolic disciple-making paradigm of the church.

## **1. A disciple-making theology of discipleship**

The Great Commission encapsulates the primary call on the life of the Christian to make disciples, who in turn make more disciples. When this is not happening, the church stagnates. Similarly, congregations will not grow in vitality and numbers when their evangelism strategies are based on a passive philosophy of ‘come and join us’, rather than on an active one, ‘go into the world.’

The challenge which is therefore facing the church today is to reclaim the power of the Great Commission. To do this involves two interrelated paradigms. The Great Commission demands an apostolic paradigm of the church. An apostle is one who is sent. An apostolic church is therefore a church which is sent into the world. This is the focus of the next section. It also demands a disciple-making paradigm of discipleship, which emphasises multiplication of disciples as opposed to the mere addition of disciples. This paradigm is the focus of the following discussion.

### **The Great Commission as the Christian’s Primary Call**

Within the Gospel according to Matthew, it is recorded that before ascending into heaven, the risen Jesus gave his disciples a

commission. The commission was delivered in this way:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

While only Matthew presents the commission as succinctly and as clearly as this, each of the other Gospel writers record the Risen Jesus as sending his disciples into the world to make more disciples. Jesus sent his disciples into the world to bear witness to what he taught them in word and action. He called them to continue his ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of God. He knew that the only way in which this ministry would continue throughout the ages is by his disciples making disciples, who in turn make more disciples. Jesus promised that he would be present with them through the empowering of the Holy Spirit to fulfil this ministry of disciple-making.

The Great Commission therefore reflects the primary call on the life of the Christian to make disciples, who are disciple-makers. In other words, true discipleship is about multiplying disciples. What then is a disciple? How does one 'make disciples'? To understand the power of Jesus' command to go and make disciples, the dynamic inherent in the term 'disciple' needs to be understood. Only then can we appreciate what it means to 'make' one, and therefore capture what Jesus is commissioning us to do.

### **Multiplying Disciples**

Within the New Testament, four key Greek words and their cognates are connected with the word 'disciple': *akoloutheo*, follow; *mathetes*, learner, pupil, disciple; *mimomai*, imitate, follow; and *opiso*, behind, after. A study of these words reveals that Jesus' call to discipleship was decisive, inclusive, permanent, and active.<sup>11</sup> A

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<sup>11</sup>Colin Brown ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Exeter, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1986), 480-494.

disciple is someone who responds to Jesus' all-inclusive and unconditional call to follow him. Disciples follows Jesus by learning and applying his teachings so that the values, attitudes and actions of Jesus are reflected in the disciple's own life. Ogden provides a succinct definition of disciple which encapsulates these characteristics. He states that "a disciple is one who responds in faith and obedience to the gracious call of Jesus Christ. Being a disciple is a lifelong process of dying to self, while allowing Jesus Christ to come alive in us."<sup>12</sup>

However, a disciple is also someone who goes and makes disciples, who makes more disciples. In other words, the command to 'make disciples' is not fulfilled unless those who have become disciples are discipled in such a way that they themselves are eventually making more disciples. Thus, according to the Great Commission, disciple-making is about multiplying disciples, not adding disciples. More often than not, disciple-making within the church has been presented as a process of addition. This paper argues that the words of the Great Commission commands Christians to make disciples, who in turn make more disciples, multiplying the number of those who are followers of Christ.

### **Levels of Disciple-Making**

Within the Church today, there are at least three different levels of understanding of disciple-making: by clergy, by leaders, by disciples making disciples.

*1. The first is where professional clergy are the disciple-makers, while the laity are the disciples.*

There is an understanding within many mainline churches that the clergy make disciples and the laity live and serve as disciples. While not always stated as explicitly as this, it is certainly implicit. Loren Mead contends that the clergy-laity dichotomy is leftover from the church in the Roman Empire, subsequent to the conversion of Constantine in 313AD. During this era it was assumed that people

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<sup>12</sup> Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 24.

were part of the Church by birth, rather than by choice. Ministry became the responsibility of the professional clergy.<sup>13</sup>

This level of understanding is disciple-making by addition- and a very limited addition at that. Any member of the clergy will affirm that pastoral care of a congregation is an all-consuming job. The more pastoral care a clergyperson gives to members of a congregation, the more they expect it from the clergyperson. Therefore, the opportunity to add new disciples - 'add' being the operative word - is severely limited by time and the energy of the one or few. Consequently it is no surprise that most clergy admit that only a small minority of unchurched people, with whom they have contact, become regular worshipping members of the congregation.

Despite its gross ineffectiveness, disciple-making by limited addition is still practised in many mainline church congregations today. Hence, these congregations are declining rapidly. Many are extinct and many more will be extinct within a short time. Disciple-making by limited addition is ineffective because it does not reflect the heart of the Great Commission, which is a call to all Christians to be disciple-makers who multiply rather than add disciples.

*2. The second is where all Christian leaders are seen as being called and equipped to make disciples.*

Rather than being limited to professional clergy, every leader makes disciples. However, they are not necessarily producing disciples who in turn make more disciples.

Ephesians 4:11-12 are pivotal verses in support of this understanding: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ." When clergy are seen as the disciple-makers, the role of the laity is to assist the clergy in their ministry. This scripture conveys the reverse as being true. Leaders are called to equip all Christians for their particular ministry.

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13 Loren Mead. *The Once and Future Church* (Washington DC: Alban Institute. 1991). 13-22.

Christians will minister according to the particular spiritual gifts given to them. Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 8 list some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are distributed to all believers as the Lord determines (1 Corinthians 12:6,11).

This understanding affirms the call of all Christians as ministers who exercise their particular spiritual gifts interdependently with others in the Church. In this way the body of Christ is built up. According to this understanding, disciple-making occurs when leaders empower disciples to exercise their spiritual gifts in ministry within the body. Disciples are made as people discover and begin to exercise gifts of leadership, service, teaching, healing, music, hospitality, and so forth for the building up of the body.

While this understanding of disciple-making is significantly more effective than disciple-making by limited addition, it still falls short of the intent of the Great Commission. According to this level of understanding, disciple-making is equated with helping Christians discover their spiritual gifts and releasing them into ministry. People can be equipped for ministry, and use their spiritual gifts in the church, without intentionally making disciples themselves. For example, through the ministry of equipping leaders, a Christian may discover he or she has the gift of teaching and a passion for ministry with children. However, unless this person is intentionally seeking to make disciples by leading and nurturing more people into this ministry, then the church leadership is left to make more disciples. Equipping leadership is vital for disciple-making, but by itself is insufficient. It is still disciple-making by addition, which again falls short of the intent of the Great Commission.

*3. The third level of understanding is where all Christians are called and equipped to make disciples, who make more disciples.*

At this level, leaders are called to equip people for ministry according to Ephesians 4:11-12. Those who are released into ministry are given responsibility for making more disciples. It is not only the responsibility of equipping leaders to make disciples, but the responsibility of all disciples to make disciples, who in turn make more disciples. This is disciple-making by multiplication, and it reflects the full intent of the Great Commission. This understanding incorporates the dynamic of reproduction as well as

the dynamic of equipping. Churches in which there is equipping leadership and disciples making disciples are vital, growing churches.

## **A Biblical Theology of Disciple-Making**

### *1. The Disciple-Making Ministry of Jesus*

Even a cursory reading of the Gospels, and particularly the synoptics, leads the reader to conclude that Jesus' primary purpose was to proclaim and inaugurate the kingdom of God on earth. He did this through teaching, through supernatural signs and through human acts which demonstrate the Kingdom qualities of righteousness and justice. However, it is also clear from the synoptic Gospels that Jesus did not pursue the task of proclaiming the Kingdom of God in isolation. Rather than miraculously impart knowledge and gifting to the multitudes that followed him, he chose to invest time into mentoring a small band of followers whom he personally selected to be his disciples. Jesus' strategy in doing this was obvious. He intended his ministry to continue long after his ascension, therefore he devoted time to making disciples who would continue his ministry. These disciples would in turn make more disciples and so on, in readiness for his return.

The Gospels also reveal the method that Jesus used in making disciples. As stated previously, it began with a call - an invitation to follow him. Jesus then taught them about the Kingdom of God and what it meant to be in relationship with God. The disciples sat with him as he taught the crowds (Matthew 5:1 ff), and he spent time giving them specific teaching (e.g. Matthew 10:5 ff). Jesus modelled the attitudes, behaviour, and actions that he wanted them to emulate. He modelled a heart of compassion (Matthew 15:32-39; and Mark 6:34), and a ministry of healing, deliverance, and miracles (Matthew 8:14, 23-27, and 9:18-25). Jesus taught them about prayer, including praying with a right attitude (Matthew 6:5-15), praying for the lost (Matthew 9:38), and persisting in prayer (Luke 1:1-13). He modelled a life of prayer to them (Matthew 14:23; and Luke 6:12), and revealed his heart for the lost (Luke 15). Jesus challenged wrong attitudes within them (Mark 9:33-37, and 10:35-45), and instructed them to be cleansed from sin (Matthew 15:1-20,



and 23:1-36).

Included in this training, Jesus sent them out to do what they had observed him doing. We read that Jesus “called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits . . . So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them” (Mark 6:7,12,13; also Matthew 10:5-42; and Luke 9:1-6). In a similar fashion, Luke records Jesus sending out seventy others in pairs, giving them a similar commission. They also returned, rejoicing because the demons submitted to them (Luke 10:1-12, and 17-20).

As Jesus’ earthly ministry was drawing to a close, he began preparing his disciples to continue his ministry without his physical presence, but with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Within his farewell discourses as recorded in John, chapters 13 to 17, Jesus assures his disciples that after he has gone, they will remain in full fellowship with him through the Holy spirit (14:15-17, and 15:26 f.). People will know they are his disciples, as they continue to serve others in the way that he taught them (John 13:34,35). The final phase in Jesus’ discipleship training is encapsulated in the Great Commission, as he sent them out to make disciples, as he had made disciples of them first (Matthew 28:18-20).

Jesus’ method of making disciples can be summarised as follows: He called them to follow him; he taught, modelled, and ministered with them; he sent them out to minister to others and then come back and reflect with him; he prepared them to minister without him; and then sent them to go and make disciples of others, thus repeating the pattern that he modelled. It was an approach of disciple-making by multiplication.

## *2. The Disciple-Making Ministry of the Early Church*

The early church continued Jesus’ ministry of disciple-making by multiplication. Following Pentecost, the apostles continued to minister in the way they had learned from Jesus. They preached and confirming signs followed; consequently, the Lord added daily

to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). However, the fact that the Christian Church still exists today bears witness to the fact that the disciples did more than only preach, teach, and heal. The ministry of Jesus Christ continues today because the early disciples continued his ministry, and made disciples who continued Jesus ministry, as Jesus had commissioned them to do. These disciples in turn made disciples, who in turn made more disciples.

It is not clear within the early chapters of the book of Acts which disciples are making disciples. However we are told that the three thousand who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon were baptised and began to devote themselves to "the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers" (Acts 2:42). We can assume that many of these new disciples began to make more disciples (Acts 2:47). Consequently, there was a need to expand and diversify the leadership base with the commission of the seven (Acts 6). Consequently, the number of disciples increased greatly (Acts 6:7).

Within later chapters of the book of Acts, we read that it was a disciple named Ananias who laid hands on Saul after his conversion (Acts 9:10, 17). Someone had obviously discipled Ananias, who in turn continued to make disciples. Early in Saul's ministry he had disciples (Acts 9:25). Barnabas and Saul disciple John Mark (Acts 12:25). We read that together they "made many disciples" and "strengthened the souls of the disciples" in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, and appointed elders in each church (Acts 14:21-23). Paul also discipled Timothy (Acts 16:1), Erastus (Acts 19:22) and Titus (Titus 1:5).

The disciple-making relationship between Paul and Timothy closely follows the principles that Jesus laid down. Just as Jesus invited his disciples to follow him, so Paul invited Timothy to accompany him as a follower of Jesus (Acts 16:1-3). Paul modelled ministry to Timothy (Acts 16:5, 2 Timothy 3:10-11), taught him (1 Timothy 1:18, and 1 & 2 Timothy), and they shared together in ministry (Acts 16:4-5; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; and 2 Corinthians 1:1). During this time, Paul taught Timothy the things that were needed for him to grow in maturity in the faith. He encouraged him to be a person of prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-4), to

continually be cleansed of sin (2 Timothy 2:20-26) and to study the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul demonstrated to Timothy the same passion for the lost that Jesus demonstrated to his disciples (1 Timothy 1:12-16, and 2:1,4). Just as Jesus sent his disciples out on their own when they were ready, so Paul did with Timothy (Acts 19:22; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; and Philippians 2:19).

Most importantly, Paul sent Timothy to make disciples, who would in turn make more disciples. Paul says to Timothy “what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 Timothy 2:2). Like Jesus, Paul’s method of disciple-making was one of multiplying his ministry by building the kingdom in others, not being merely content to add names to the list of those saved. Paul understood that it was imperative to reproduce himself in those who would follow after he had gone.

## **21st Century Disciples**

In summary, a twenty-first century disciple of Jesus Christ will understand his or her primary call to be that of making disciples who are disciple-makers. They will be men and women of prayer, who faithfully study the Scriptures, who grow in holiness through confessing and repenting of their sin. They will have a heart for the lost, which will motivate them to bear witness to their faith in word and action, through which they will make disciples. Twenty-first century disciples will learn from those who are discipling them how to share their faith with others. They will work with their disciplers in discipling others, and under their guidance will be released to make disciples.

However, twenty-first century disciples cannot make disciples on their own. They need to be part of a disciple-making church. The post-Pentecost disciple-making occurred within the context of a growing Church, sent into the world. It was an apostolic church. Therefore, not only do disciples need to comprehend the full intent of the Great Commission, so does the Church. The Church needs to understand the implication behind Jesus’ word ‘go’ (Matthew 28:18;

and Mark 16:15)<sup>14</sup>, and ‘send’ (John 20:21), and witness to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:48; and Acts 1:8). This is the focus of the next section.

## **2. A disciple-making theology of the church**

### **The Great Commission as the Church’s Apostolic Calling**

The phrase ‘make disciples’ is not the only important component within the words of the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. The disciples are to ‘go’ and make disciples. They were not commissioned to stay and make disciples, but to go. They were ‘sent’ (John 20:21). The disciples were only to wait long enough to receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit. After being baptised with the Holy Spirit, they were to bear witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:49; and Acts 1:5,8).

It is also important to emphasise that this commission was not given to the disciples individually, but collectively. These eleven disciples were the founding nucleus of the world-wide disciple-making community, who would become known as the Church. He purposefully established this ministry of disciple-making in the context of community. The call is for the community of believers to both go forth and make disciples, as one community. The vine and branches allegory of John 15 provides a conclusive reference to the coming community. “The idea of many branches being knit together by being joined by one stem is a vivid illustration of corporateness. Not only can no branch exist without being in living contact with the vine, but the branches have no relations to each other, except through the vine.”<sup>15</sup>

However, it is Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17 that provides the strongest evidence of his intention that his mission continue through his disciples as a unified community, not as individuals. In his prayer to the Father, Jesus says: “as you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). Jesus’ prayer that the disciples be one (John 17:21-23) clearly emphasises

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<sup>14</sup> The Greek for this word ‘go’ literally means ‘having gone.’

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 723.

the importance of community for the continuation of the mission of Jesus.

There is no doubt that the mission of Jesus to proclaim the kingdom of God in word, sign and action is to be continued by his disciples in the context of an interdependent community when we consider the evidence: the commission to the twelve (Matthew 10:5-42; and Luke 9:1-6), the commission to the seventy (Luke 10:1-12), and the post-resurrection commission to the disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

### **An Apostolic Church**

This community of disciple-makers is therefore destined to be an apostolic community, which begins as an apostolic church - a 'sent' church. The Greek word *apostello* means 'to send'. The word appears 131 times in the New Testament, 119 of which are found in the Gospels and Acts.<sup>16</sup> It is the word used to describe Jesus 'sending' the twelve disciples on their mission to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal (Luke 9:2). It is also used to describe the appointing of the seventy and 'sending' them off in pairs in mission (Luke 10:1,3). The Greek word *pempo* which also means 'send' is used as a virtual synonym for *apostello* in John, Luke and Acts.<sup>17</sup> The word *apostolos* is translated 'apostle'. Initially referring to the twelve apostles (Luke 6:13; and Matthew 10:2), it described being sent as an envoy or ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). Later Paul, Barnabas and others are referred to as apostles (for example, Acts 14:14; and Romans 16:7)<sup>18</sup>.

The Church of Jesus Christ is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). In other words, those who are called to the office of apostle (Ephesians 4:11) are not the only ones whom Jesus has sent into the world with a message. Rather, apostles are to give leadership to the building of a 'sent' Church.

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16 E. von Eicken and H. Lindner, "Apostello", *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Volume 1*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1986), 128.

17 *ibid.*

18 D. Muller, "Apostello", *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Volume 1*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1986), 130.

Jesus made this clear in the words of the Great Commission. He did not say to the eleven disciples (also referred to as apostles in Matthew 10:2) “go, therefore and proclaim my message”. Rather, he commissioned them to “go therefore and make disciples”. In other words, he commissioned them to be an apostolic people. The reason that the early Church congregations went a long way towards fulfilling Jesus’ challenge to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), was because the apostles began to build and lead a church. The apostles went into the world, growing and multiplying a community of believers - believers who were sent, and went back into the world.

Jesus established the church as a disciple-making church. A disciple-making church is an apostolic church. The Great Commission therefore demands a multiplication paradigm of disciple-making, and it demands an apostolic paradigm of the church. Despite the fact that many congregations of most Christian denominations throughout the world confess that they believe in the ‘one holy Catholic and apostolic church’, the majority of congregations of mainline churches do not understand what it means to be an apostolic church. The following section describes three different levels of understanding of the church which exist today. Following this is an apostolic theology of the church and a profile of the twenty-first century church.

## **The Purpose of the Church**

Three levels of understanding about the purpose of the church parallel the three levels of understanding of disciple making.

### *1. The Church as Caring for the People*

This understanding of the role of the local church as caring for the people parallels the understanding of the clergy as disciple-makers<sup>19</sup>. Within the Christendom Paradigm, the primary role of the local church is to care for the people who are part of it. A church in which the primary role is caring for the people is a highly institutionalised church. The more people in the congregation, the

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<sup>19</sup> The understanding of clergy as disciple-makers is described in Chapter One.

more clergy are needed, when the primary role of the clergy is to care for the people. The more clergy that exist, the more administration is needed to maintain an acceptable level of care. Administration is also needed to ensure that mission happens overseas or in remote and less fortunate parts of the country. Missionaries need to be trained and funds need to be raised. The responsibilities, however are taken out of the hands of 'ordinary' Christians.

A church in which the primary role is to care for the people is in direct disobedience to the Great Commission, as this understanding restricts disciple-making to the sole responsibility of the clergy. However, the institutional church structures ensure that the primary focus of their time and energy is on those already in the church. A church in which the primary role is caring for the people is an inward focused church, which is in direct contrast to the emphasis of the Great Commission.

## *2. The Church as Building Up the Body*

Declining church attendance, combined with the influence of the charismatic movement, contributed to a different level of understanding of the church. A key part of this change is re-exegeting (or rediscovering) Ephesians 4:11-12: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Whereas the second level of understanding of disciple-making focused on the phrase "to equip the saints for the work of ministry", this second level of understanding of the Church's role focuses on the phrase "for building up the body of Christ."

This represents a significant move from the first level of understanding. It is the whole people of God, not the clergy who take responsibility for the building up of the body of Christ. All Christians care for one another, and discover and exercise their spiritual gifts. Paul's analogy of the church as a body, as expounded in 1 Corinthians 12 and other places, plays a large part in the thinking behind this understanding. In order to be a disciple-making and multiplying community of faith, the church must

perceive itself as a body of believers, each with different gifts to be exercised together.

However, this second level of understanding is limited because it tends to see the building up of the body as an end in itself. A congregation may encourage the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit by all members. The fruits of this may be evidenced by creative and diverse worship experiences, and strong ministries for and with children, teenagers and young adults. There may be a small groups ministry which caters for all ages, led by trained and gifted leaders. However, these ministries are often developed with the implicit, or even explicit, assumption that this wonderful demonstration of the 'building up of the body' will automatically draw in potential disciples.

Churches which work at building up the body usually do experience seasons of numerical growth. However, analysis of this growth usually reveals the majority of it as being Christians transferring from 'less exciting' churches to a church which 'meets their needs'. Such churches inadvertently send a message which says 'come and join us'. This message is contrary to the charge of the Great Commission to go into the world and make disciples. Congregations in which the building up of the body is an end in itself fall short of the intent of the Great Commission. Apart from the 'end in itself' perception, there are several other reasons why congregations, who embrace this level of understanding, fall short of the intent of the Great Commission.

Firstly, the understanding of the Church as body often exists in parallel with the clergy/laity paradigm. That is, the clergy strongly encourage the discovery and exercise of spiritual gifts by all members of the congregation. However, they are limited by denominational regulations, practices, and expectations of the people.

Secondly, there is often within this level of understanding a strong conviction that mission flows out of nurture. Christian nurture, evidenced by teaching and pastoral care, is seen as primary. Mission and evangelism is ineffective, unless the body is built up through solid teaching and care. Biblical teaching and pastoral care



are important and vital to the growth of the body. However, if they are given priority over mission, then mission never happens. For example, many Christians consider themselves to be 'mature in faith' (Ephesians 4:13) and do not see it as important to make disciples of others.

The more nurture and fellowship that people receive, the more they demand. The more emphasis that is placed on nurture, whether by clergy or by small group leaders, the more people value having 'their needs met', and the less motivated they become to engage in mission. Giving nurture priority over mission encourages an introversion which is at odds with the intent of the Great Commission, which commissions all believers to 'go' (Matthew 28:19; and Mark 16:15), to be 'sent' (John 20:21), and to be witnesses to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:48; and Acts 1:8). The early church was obedient to this commission, giving mission first priority. As they did this, they experienced nurture and fellowship like never before (Acts 2:41-18, 4:29-35).

### *3. The Church as Extending the Kingdom*

The third level of understanding of the purpose of the church is to continue Jesus' ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of God in word and action. This is done in the spirit and pattern of the early church, of being sent into the world with the good news of the gospel. The ethos of 'building up the body' is vital to this understanding of the church. However, building up the body is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The end is to extend the kingdom of God by making disciples, who make disciples.

The kingdom of God is extended when the lost are found, and so searching for the lost is the primary focus of the church which is sent into the world. Congregations which reflect this understanding are kingdom oriented, as opposed to church oriented. Howard Snyder expresses it this way:

Church people think about how to get people into the church;  
Kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world.  
Church people worry that the world might change the church;

Kingdom people work to see the church change the world.<sup>20</sup>

A kingdom-oriented congregation is an apostolic congregation - a 'sent' congregation. It reflects the full intent of the Great Commission - to go and make disciples. The following section argues that the ministry of Jesus and the early church as recorded in the scriptures, articulates an apostolic theology of the church. It is a theology of the church which affirms this level of understanding and purpose of the church. It reflects the full intent of the Great Commission.

### **An Apostolic Theology of the Church**

The ministry and teaching of Jesus lay the foundation for the apostolic ministry of the Church. The book of Acts records the early church continuing this apostolic ministry of Jesus, in obedience to the Great Commission. The apostle Paul, a key apostle and theologian of the early church, continues to develop this apostolic theology of the church, building on the teaching of Jesus.

#### *1. The Apostolic Ministry of Jesus*

By first sending out the twelve (Mark 6:7,12,13; Matthew 10:5-42; and Luke 9:1-6) and later the seventy (Luke 10:1-12, 17-20), Jesus not only demonstrates his equipping style of leadership, but role models an apostolic or 'sending' component to the ministry. Just as the Father sent Jesus to the world for an apostolic mission, so Jesus sent his disciples to continue in that mission (John 17:18, 20:21). In proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, Jesus did not remain within Nazareth, but moved throughout Galilee and beyond, eventually to Jerusalem. His mission was apostolic. Two features of this apostolic mission are consistently noted: the proclaiming of the good news of the kingdom, and the miraculous signs which followed.

When Jesus sent the twelve and then the seventy, this pattern continued. He sent them to proclaim the good news and to heal the

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<sup>20</sup> Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1983), 11.

sick and cast out demons (Luke 9:1-2, 6; and 10:9,17). He commissioned his disciples to be a community of believers who would continue this apostolic mission. They were commissioned to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19), to “go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” with signs following (Mark 16:15-18), and to be ‘witnesses’ (Luke 24:48) “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Jesus’ apostolic ministry was reinforced with apostolic teaching. This teaching is most clearly articulated in two parables concerning the sowing of seed (Mark 4:1-20, 26-29), and his statement about the harvest (Matthew 9:35-38; and Luke 10:2). Matthew records the following:

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest’ (cf Luke 10:2).

Again the pattern of Jesus’ apostolic ministry is noted: proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, with signs following. However, Jesus is lamenting the fact that there is a harvest of souls for the kingdom, but a shortage of workers to bring in the harvest. He gives a call to prayer – to pray to God for workers, who will be *sent* into the harvest – first as Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and sent them on their mission (Matthew 10:1-42).

However, a harvest will not come unless seeds are planted. Within Mark 4 Jesus tells a parable of a sower, who sows seed. Some of the seed does not survive because it falls on the path, on rocky ground, and among thorns. However that which fell on good soil brought forth grain, and grew up to yield thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. (Mark 4:3-8). The seed is the word of God (Mark 4:14). Mark then records Jesus’ Parable of the Growing Seed:

The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come (Mark 4:26-29).

What is the clear message for disciples who are disciple-makers in an apostolic church? The disciples are responsible for the sowing, God does the growing, and the disciples then come and bring in the harvest. It is not possible to harvest without first sowing. It is of no use sowing, unless harvesting also takes place to bring in the fruits of the sowing. It is not the sower or the harvester's role to grow the plants, as this is up to God. The harvester's role is to take whatever measures can be taken to ensure that the environment is maximised to release its growth potential.

## *2. The Apostolic Ministry of the Early Church*

The day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 marked the beginning of the fulfilment of the Great Commission. With the coming of the Holy Spirit to give power to witness as promised (Luke 24:49; and Acts 1:8), the disciples responded to Jesus' call to go into the world. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, began to preach the good news of the Gospel of the kingdom, and three thousand people became disciples. These disciples were baptised, and then "devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

The book of Acts is the record of the apostles continuing Jesus' ministry to proclaim the Kingdom in word (e.g. Acts 2:14-36; 3:1 ff; 4:8 ff; and 8:4 ff), in sign (e.g. 3:1-10; 5:12-16; and 8:4-8), and in action (e.g. 4:32-37; and 6:1-4). Jesus' commission to 'go and make disciples' is obeyed (e.g. Acts 2:37-47; 6:1-7; 8:9 ff; 10:1-44; and 13:1 ff). Peter and the other apostles moved throughout the region, preaching the gospel with signs following. They were fulfilling the apostolic commission that Jesus gave them. They were apostles (*apostolos*), sent by Jesus to continue his ministry of extending the kingdom of God.

The early church was not only a church with apostles, it was an apostolic church. The apostles, who were sent in obedience to the Great Commission, not only made disciples, but disciples who were disciple-makers. The record of the early church supports this:

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 . . . Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. (Acts 8:1, 4).

As it was with Jesus and the apostles, the disciples of the apostles were sent to continue Jesus' ministry of proclaiming the kingdom, and signs followed. The teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, worship and service, and care (Acts 2:37-47, 4:23-37) were not ends in themselves, but responses to the apostles being sent. They continued the mission of Jesus, going into the world to make more disciples, who were equipped to make more disciples.

### *3. Paul's Apostolic Theology of the Church*

Upon his conversion, Saul, who later became known as Paul, became one of the most significant apostles of the early church. In his apostolic ministry of teaching, he reinforced Jesus' apostolic teaching, thus developing an apostolic theology of the church.

#### **Building up the body**

As previously stated, Paul affirmed that God gifts leaders for the role of equipping the whole people of God for the work of ministry. Through this equipping, the body of Christ is built up (Ephesians 4:11-12). It is not the people who do the building, but Christ (see Matthew 16:18). Paul states that the church receives its life and authority from Christ as the head of the Church (Ephesians 4:15-16). The church is totally dependant on Christ for its direction and life. This truth is affirmed by Jesus' statement when he says that he is the true vine and we are the branches (John 15:1-11). He says, "apart from me you can do nothing" (verse 5).

Also, the individual Christians, who are members of the church (the

body), are interdependent, rather than dependent on each other. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-30, it is clear that each member of the body is assigned a particular gift (*charis*) to be exercised in mutual giving and receiving, for completing tasks within the fellowship, and in fulfilling its commission to proclaim the good news to the world.

Clearly then, Paul teaches that the individual members of the church, in and of themselves, do not constitute the whole. Rather, the unity of the body, and the life of the body comes from Christ himself: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12 f.).<sup>21</sup>

This understanding of the church, as a living, dynamic organism, holding in tension unity and diversity, illustrates the disciple-making call of the church. Disciples cannot be effective disciple-makers on their own, because they do not possess all the gifts, as Christ did. However, disciple-making happens in the church, as disciples together witness and service Christ in the world, and subsequently fruitful disciple-making develops. This does not infer that individual disciples cannot lead others into a relationship with Jesus Christ. However, the ongoing nurture and mentoring of a disciple, who becomes a disciple-maker, is made more effective when it is provided by more than one disciple. It is within the context of the church--the body of Christ--that holistic disciple-making occurs.

Through the equipping of the saints for ministry, God releases the gifts of the Holy Spirit, through which Christ builds the body. Paul gives illustration to this in his statement: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6). In saying this, Paul reinforces Jesus teaching on the parable of the growing seed (Mark 4:21-25).

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<sup>21</sup> A detailed discussion of this is found in S. Wibbing's article "Body" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Volume 1*, ed. Colin Brown (Exeter United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1986), 232-38.

## Extending the kingdom

Paul's teaching on the Church in Ephesians also clearly emphasises that the building up of the body is not an end in itself. He states that leaders are given to equip the saints for ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ "until all of us come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). The building up of the body is for the purposes of extending the kingdom of God. This is why Paul tells that Corinthian Christians that they have been reconciled to Christ, and have been given a ministry of reconciliation. They are to be ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). This is why he told the Philippian Christians that it is through God at work within them, enabling them to will and work for his pleasure, that they will shine like stars in the world (Philippians 2:13,15). This is why Paul, in his discipling of Timothy, urged him to pray for everyone, as God desires everyone to be saved (2 Timothy 2:4).

Within these words we hear Paul's apostolic heart for the church. This is further reinforced in his teaching in chapter one of the letter to the Ephesians. We read that Jesus is not only head of the Church, but head of all things: "And he has put all things under his (Christ's) feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him which fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). God has "a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:10). God's plan and desire is that everyone is saved (2 Timothy 2:4). He does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God's plan is to be fulfilled through the church, which is to "fully reveal Christ's headship over the whole created order."<sup>22</sup>

In commenting on the significance of Ephesians 1:22-23, Frank Laubach makes this statement: "When Christ was here on earth, he was limited to performing his ministry in one place and at one time . . . He healed whoever he touched, but his touch was necessarily limited by time and space . . . As the body of Christ, the Church is

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<sup>22</sup> Synder, *Liberating the Church*, 59.

Christ's multiplied hands, feet, voice and compassionate heart."23 In other words, as the body of Christ, the Church multiplies disciples who multiply the Kingdom ministry of Jesus. The Kingdom ministry of Jesus is extended when the church functions as an apostolic church--a body of interdependent disciple-makers sent into the world to make disciples, who in turn, make more disciples.

### **The Great Commission Revisited**

It was concluded in the first section that the Great Commission demands the primary call of the Christian to be a disciple who is a disciple-maker. This call requires a multiplication paradigm of disciple-making. This second section now concludes that the Great Commission also demands an apostolic church - a church sent into the world, with leadership that equips people for an interdependent ministry of disciple-making. Through this, the body is built up and the kingdom of God is extended, thus continuing the ministry of Jesus in the world. This requires the church to adopt an apostolic paradigm.

The multiplication paradigm of disciple-making demands leaders who equip and multiply. The Apostolic paradigm of the church demands apostolic leadership. Leadership which is equipping, multiplying and apostolic is life-giving leadership. It demands a disciple-making and sending approach. When this occurs, the power of the Great Commission is restored and the spirit of Jesus and the early church is reflected in the life of the twenty-first century church.

### **3. Current research into vital churches**

Current research confirms that vital growing churches are those which have reclaimed an apostolic disciple-making vision.

Episcopal Priest and President of the Alban Institute, Loren Mead,

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23 Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1990), 32.



published a book in 1991 called *The Once and Future Church*.<sup>24</sup> Mead challenges the mainstream church as continuing to operate within a Christendom Paradigm dating back to Constantine, whereas we live, work, and witness within a Mission Paradigm. In 1996 he published another book in which he identifies five challenges for the church if it is to effectively transition into a mission paradigm: (1) to transfer the ownership of the Church from clergy to laity, (2) to find new structures to carry our faith, (3) to discover a passionate spirituality, (4) to feed the world's need for community, and (5) to become an apostolic people.<sup>25</sup>

In 1993 United Methodist Minister and Director of 21st Century Strategies, William Easum, published a book titled, *Dancing with Dinosaurs: Ministry in a Hostile and Hurting World*.<sup>26</sup> As a Church Consultant who travels some 300 days of the year, Easum observes first hand many churches in the United States. He concludes that churches effectively ministering into the twenty-first century are churches where: (1) small groups replace programs, (2) pastors equip persons, rather than do ministry, (3) effective worship is culturally relevant, (4) buildings are not important, and (5) weekday ministries overshadow the importance of Sunday. In addition to this, he lists three essential ingredients: (1) biblical integrity, (2) evangelism, and (3) quality.

George Hunter III, who is a professor at Ausbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, surveyed nine churches within the United States whom he identified as being apostolic congregations. Some of these churches were independent, while others were part of a mainstream denomination. Hunter states that apostolic congregations are different from traditional congregations in fifty ways, but identifies ten distinctive features which account for about 80 percent of the difference, those being: (1) grounding believers and seekers in Scripture, (2) disciplined, and earnest in prayer, with an expectation and experience God's action in response, (3) understanding, affinity, and compassion for the lost, unchurched,

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<sup>24</sup> Mead, *The Once and Future Church*.

<sup>25</sup> Loren Mead., *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church* (Washington DC: Alban Institute, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> William Easum, *Dancing with Dinosaur* (Nashville Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1993).

unchurched people, (4) obedience to the Great Commission--more as warrant or privilege, than mere duty, (5) a motivationally sufficient vision for what people, as disciples, can become, (6) adaption to the language, music, and style of the target population's culture, (7) willingness to work had to involve everyone, believers and seekers, in small groups, (8) advocacy of the involvement of all Christians in lay ministries for which they are gifted, (9) regular pastoral care of members through regular spiritual conversation with someone who is gifted for shepherding ministry, and (10) engagement in multiple ministries to unchurched people.<sup>27</sup>

The consistent findings of this research is obvious. However, there are two expressions of current research which have considerable impact throughout the church at present. The first is undertaken by C. Peter Wagner<sup>28</sup>, into what he calls the New Apostolic Reformation. The second is undertaken by Christian Schwarz<sup>29</sup>, into what he calls Natural Church Development. Findings of this research are consistent with those above. However, they clearly reveal a way of reclaiming the power of the Great Commission through recapturing the apostolic vision of the church and reinforcing a disciple-making by multiplication paradigm, respectively.

### **The New Apostolic Reformation**

Wagner contends that the mainline church crisis exists because their institutional structures represent "old wineskins"<sup>30</sup>. Jesus said: "Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise the skins burst, and the wine is spilled; and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17). Since Christ began building his church 2000 years ago, it has changed many times in the way that it has grown. With each change, a new wineskin was required. The growing vital churches, which are independent churches, members of apostolic

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<sup>27</sup> George Hunter III, *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1996), 29-32

<sup>28</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake* (Ventura, California: Regal, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Churchsmart, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> Wagner, *Churchquake*, 15-16.

networks, and congregations within mainline denominations, are part of a new wineskin being formed. Wagner calls this new wineskin the *New Apostolic Reformation*, and local churches whose ministries embrace this as *new apostolic churches*.

The expression “new reformation” is not new. Greg Ogden<sup>31</sup> and Lyle Schaller<sup>32</sup> recently published books titled *The New Reformation*, and William Beckham authored *The Second Reformation*.<sup>33</sup> The first reformation is the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. This reformation was largely theological, whereas the new reformation is not so much a reformation of faith, but of practice. Wagner states that “this current reformation is not so much against corruption and apostasy as it is against irrelevance.<sup>34</sup> The word ‘apostolic’ is used because churches which identify with this movement give a high priority to reaching out in effective ways to the unchurched. Many churches, who identify with this movement, also recognise the New Testament office of apostle as alive and well in the church today.

In observing new apostolic churches, Wagner identifies nine common characteristics, as follows.<sup>35</sup>

*New Name.* The name of new apostolic churches is more likely to reflect the vision of the church, or the region or community in which it is situated, rather than the denomination.

*New Authority Structure.* An indispensable quality within new apostolic churches is strong, visionary leadership. Pastors of these churches are perceived as the leaders of the church; whereas in most traditional denomination churches, the parish council or board of deacons lead, and the pastor is an employee.

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31 Ogden, *The New Reformation*.

32 Lyle Schaller., *The New Reformation* (Nashville Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1995).

33 William Beckham, *The Second Reformation* (Houston TX: Touch Publications, 1997).

34 C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake* 36-37.

35 C. Peter Wagner, *The New Apostolic Churches* (Ventura California: Regal, 1998), 18-25.

*New Leadership Training.* Within new apostolic churches, all members are encouraged to discover their spiritual gifts and use them for ministry, while leaders are mentored and trained through seminars or conferences, or in-house bible schools.

*New Ministry Focus.* Many denominational churches are heritage driven, with their ministry philosophy being determined by their historical antecedents. Conversely, new apostolic churches are vision driven, being more concerned about where God is leading in the future, than how we lead in the past.

*New Worship Style.* Contemporary, culturally relevant worship is a key characteristic of new apostolic churches.

*New Prayer Forms.* A fervent and uncompromising commitment to prayer is another essential dynamic within new apostolic churches. Days of prayer and fasting, prayer walks, and prayer summits will be scheduled on a regular basis.

*New Financing.* Whereas most mainline denominations are facing a serious funding crisis, new apostolic churches have relatively few financial problems.

*New Outreach.* The primary focus of the new apostolic church is reaching out to the lost and hurting. Focused, strategic evangelistic ministries, ministries of care and compassion, and new church plants all feature prominently on their agenda.

*New Power Orientation.* Not all new apostolic churches consider themselves to be charismatic, nevertheless they display an openness to the Holy Spirit and affirm that all of the New Testament spiritual gifts are in operation today. Unlike many mainline denominational churches, they encourage ministries of healing, deliverance, spiritual warfare, prophecy, and so forth.

There is an obvious correlation between Wagner's characteristics and those identified by Mead, Easum and Hunter III. Even more significant is the correlation between the characteristics of the New Testament apostolic churches, as described in this chapter: strong apostolic leadership; people sent into the world to proclaim the

Gospel, with signs following; devotion to the apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, and the raising up new leaders. It appears as though the profile of a twenty-first century apostolic church includes the characteristics identified by Wagner and others.

## Natural Church Development

From 1994-96 Christian A. Schwarz, head of the Institute for Church Development in Germany, undertook what he claims to be the most comprehensive study ever conducted on the causes of church growth. He surveyed more than one thousand churches in thirty-two countries on five continents. Schwarz says:

To my knowledge, our research provides the first world-wide scientifically verifiable answer to the question, "What church growth principles are true, regardless of culture and theological persuasion?" We strove to find a valid answer to the question "What should each church and every Christian do to obey the Great Commission in today's World?"<sup>36</sup>

Published in 1996, Schwarz's research identifies eight 'quality characteristics' of growing churches: (1) empowering leadership, (2) gift-oriented ministry, (3) passionate spirituality, (4) functional structures, (5) inspiring worship, (6) holistic small groups, (7) need-oriented evangelism, and (8) loving relationships.<sup>37</sup>

Schwarz states his conviction that many Christians are sceptical of church growth because to them it presents techniques which seek to achieve church growth using human abilities, rather than God's means. In contrast to this, Schwarz presents a different approach to church growth, which he calls 'natural' or 'biotic' church development. "'Biotic' implies nothing less that a rediscovery of the laws of life (in Greek, *bios*). The goal is to let God's growth automatism flourish, instead of wasting energy on human-made programs."<sup>38</sup>

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36 Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 27.

37 *ibid.*, 22-37.

38 *ibid.*, 7.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Schwarz's approach recaptures Jesus' teaching in the Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29). That is, disciples do the sowing and the reaping, but God does the growing. Schwarz's understanding of church growth affirms the Church as a living, dynamic organism, rather than an institution; thus, his understanding reflects Paul's theology of the church, as described earlier in this chapter. He sees growth and development resting in principles which promote the health of churches. "Effective churches are healthy churches; healthy churches are growing churches--they make more and better disciples."<sup>39</sup>

If, as Jesus and Paul emphasise, it is God that does the growing, what specifically can disciples do within the sowing that prepares for God's growth to be released? The real values of Schwarz's research is that he addresses this very question. He identifies 'biotic' principles which facilitate God's growth. Three of these principles are particularly relevant to the paradigm of disciple-making by multiplication.

*Interdependence.* This principle affirms Paul's teaching of the church as a body consisting of interdependent members. Church structures and practices should encourage an interdependent relationship between each of the various ministries within the congregation.

*Multiplication.* The principle of multiplication applies to all areas of church life: "Just as the true fruit of an apple tree is not an apple, but another tree; the true fruit of a small group is not a new Christian, but another group; the true fruit of a church is not a new group, but a new church; the true fruit of a leader is not a follower, but a new leader."<sup>40</sup>

*Functionality.* This principle asks whether the ministry is bearing fruit, in terms of both quality and quantity. This may appear to be obvious, however, numerous churches have ministries that go on ad infinitum without this type of periodic evaluation process.

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<sup>39</sup> Robert E. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1989), 17.

<sup>40</sup> Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 68.

When the eight quality characteristics are considered in light of these biotic principles, it is the adjectives rather than the nouns that are important. For example, when the multiplication principles are applied to leadership, they empower the leadership. When the principle of interdependence is applied to ministry, it becomes gift-oriented ministry. When the principle of functionality is applied to a congregation's organisational structure, it becomes a functional structure. The application of these biotic principles therefore provide a healthy environment for an apostolic disciple-making church to develop and grow.<sup>41</sup>

### **Conclusion: a profile of the twenty-first century church**

While taking totally different approaches, Wagner's New Apostolic Reformation and Schwarz's Natural Church Development each affirm an apostolic paradigm of the church and an multiplication paradigm of disciple-making. Each of these is required to restore the power of the Great Commission. Neither Wagner's nor Schwarz's research reflects exclusive indicators of healthy, growing churches. However, based on biblical and theological evidence, and the sustained growth of some contemporary churches, it appears as though Wagner's and Schwarz's research describe characteristics of apostolic disciple-making congregations.. Thus, apostolic disciple-making congregations reflect the church of the twenty-first century. This is a church which embodies the full intent of the Great Commission.

A mission strategy for an apostolic disciple-making church will therefore reflect the presuppositions of the apostolic paradigm of the church. It will emphasise a primary purpose of being sent into the community. The life of the congregation will reflect an interdependent body of believers, equipped for the ministry of sowing and reaping the harvest which God will grow. The disciple-making strategy will reflect the presuppositions of the multiplication paradigm of disciple-making.

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41 For a more detailed discussion of the eight quality characteristics and the biotic principles, refer to Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 22-82.

It will emphasise the primary call of each member of the church to be disciple-makers at every level of church life. The disciple-making strategy of Jesus and Paul will be implemented, ensuring growth in maturity of disciples, who make more disciples. The lost will be found. The sick will be healed. The demonised set free. The Kingdom will be extended. And God will be glorified.



## 6 Ministry Confronts Secularisation

**Sam Hey**



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This paper grew out of a study of the history and growth of an indigenous Australian charismatic group, the Christian Outreach Centre (COC) movement. In this study, two factors stood out. The first was efforts of new religious groups such as COC to counter the forces of secularisation and institutionalisation that act on the church. The second was the group's revivalist emphasis on experientialism, the supernatural and healing, its appeal to past biblical models for the church and ministry and its adaptation to modern technological society.

If church and ministry are to be effective in society today they need to better understand the changes that are taking place in the world and the extent to which practices and structures aid and hinder

their mission. They must learn to adapt to a changing world without losing the core Christian values and beliefs that make their message so powerful. It is the purpose of this paper to examine some of the changes taking place in society and to consider the ways that revivalist groups such as the COC are adapting to them.

### ***The Secularisation Thesis***

The secularisation thesis predicting the decline of religion in modern societies became the dominant paradigm for religious change in the twentieth century. Two of the main advocates of the secularisation theory were Peter Berger and Bryan Wilson. Berger used the term 'secularisation' to describe a process 'by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.'<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Wilson applied the term secularisation to 'the process by which religious institutions, actions and consciousness lose their social significance.'<sup>43</sup>

The term, secularisation, was not only used to describe the restriction in the influence of religion due to changes within modern society, but also the adaptation of religion to the changing values of society. Many contemporary scholars suggested that traditional religious beliefs, teachings and practices would struggle to survive in the modern world, suggesting that they were more suited to past cultures and belief systems. They predicted a continued decline in institutionalised religion. This decline has been variously referred to as the most significant trend in religion<sup>44</sup> and the 'greatest problem facing the church,'<sup>45</sup> the 'great contemporary crisis in religion' and the great 'drama of our times.'<sup>46</sup>

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42 Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, (Middlesex, England: Penquin, 1973), p. 113.

43 See also Wilson Bryan R. *Religion in a Secular Society* (London:Watts, 1966), p. xiv; Wilson, B.R. *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 149.

44 W. Seward Salisbury, *Religion in Culture* (Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1964), p. 289

45 Salisbury, 1964, p. 280.

46 S. S. Acquaviva, *The Decline in the Sacred in Industrial Society*. Patricia Lipscomb (translator) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p. 196.

## Clarification

One of the weaknesses of the secularisation theory is the lack of clarity that surrounds the term 'secularisation.' The term needs to be carefully elucidated to avoid the vagueness that frequently surrounds its use. Secularisation is used to describe the transfer of activities from the religious to the non religious, the differentiation of religious and non religious activities, the transformation of institutions from religious to less religious spheres, change in affections and loyalties and the changing roles of religious people in a modern, complex society, the change of the locus of social control from the religious sphere to the technical and bureaucratic spheres, and increasing government responsibility for traditionally religious activities including education and welfare.

Religious decline has also been linked to other developments in modern society including industrialisation, urbanisation, economic and social development, loss of community, rationalisation, modernisation, professionalisation, bureaucratisation, and pluralisation. It can also be linked to the failure of civil religion, particularly in Europe, and to changes in the relationship between the political and religious spheres. Religious decline can also be partly explained by changing immigration and childbirth patterns, and changes in family formation. A decline in church attendance is also linked to the increased social and geographic mobility of the population, factors that have been an integral part of growth and social change in Australia and overseas.

In this study secularisation means *the accommodation of church and religion to the demands of modern twentieth century society*. This study will set out to show that this relationship is neither simple nor linear. It is a complex combination of many contributing factors, both within the church and outside of it.

Modern science was held to be the prime cause of religious decline through secularisation.<sup>47</sup> However, the rise of post modernism demonstrates that the notion that enlightenment rationalism, empirical knowledge and scientific knowledge provide an absolute

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47 Peter Berger, *A Far Glory* (New York: Anchor, Doubleday 1992), p. 26.

epistemology is questionable. A simple linear relationship between the rise of scientific thinking and religious decline is by no means clear.

On careful examination, the challenges to faith attributed to secularisation are found to be due as much to structural changes accompanying modernisation than to deeper philosophical shifts in attitudes towards religion and science. The perceived decline in the influence of religion is strongly related to the rapid increase in the size and complexity of modern society. While 'clergy' were the largest professional group in the early 1800s, with roles including teaching, counselling, keeping law and order and government clerical responsibilities, by the end of the twentieth century these roles had been replaced by increasingly specialist positions. Clergy were relegated to the periphery and religion was confined to the private sphere.

Consequently, part of the challenge facing the church is the need to redefine and rediscover the role of the clergy in a rapidly changing and increasingly specialised society. Traditional religions that invested heavily in past models and practices have often been ill equipped to adapt to changes in society. The churches have struggled to come to terms with increasing globalisation and pluralism and from revolutions in transportation and communication.

Churches have also been challenged by the decreased dependence of people on religious institutions through the increased power that modern society has given to individuals. Hierarchical, centralised, theologically-complex religious bodies have found it increasingly difficult to relate to an egalitarian society that was characterised by individualism and freedom of choice.

The threat to institutionalised religion has been further increasing by greater competition from a growing range of attractive leisure activities, greater affluence and increasing consumerism. The decrease in religious observance can be linked to increased mobility, the development of the motor car, competition for leisure time through electronic media, changing participation rates in the

work force and a decline in local, community life.<sup>48</sup> Prosperous, modern Australians have replaced trust in God and the church with a commitment to individualism, leisure and the family. Churches that have failed to respond to the many changes in society have declined, while others that see change as opportunity have grown.

### ***Secularisation Within Churches***

The most significant impact of secularisation on religion has not occur outside churches but within them. Berger observed that with the passage of time, established churches tend to become more inclusive, tolerant and open to the secular world.<sup>49</sup> As new religious groups seek acceptance by established churches and the wider society their more extreme views become moderated. The inclination to want to change society tends to decline. There is usually an increasing value placed on social decorum and rational decision-making. The value placed on less comprehensible areas including emotionalism and the supernatural decreases.<sup>50</sup> Over time liturgies and doctrines tend to become fixed in more concrete forms.

Established groups have a considerable investment to protect. They tend to look to fixed dogma and past history for security and to be wary of experimentation and new methods. Spontaneity, lay involvement and charismatic gifts tend to decline. The pursuit of security poses a strong challenge to church members who wish to pursue the transcendent, experiential, supra-rational religious expressions or pursue more confronting forms of evangelical outreach.

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48 P. Hughes, 1991 'Types of Faith and the Decline of Mainline Churches.' In Black, Alan W. *Religion in Australia: Sociological Perspectives*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), p. 102.

49 Peter Berger, 1973. *The Social Reality of Religion*, Middlesex, England: Penquin., p. 136.

50 Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Routledge, 1967), p. 132f; Wilson, Bryan R. *Religious Sects*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1970), p. 66.

### ***Five Dilemmas of Institutionalisation***

It is inevitable that the more religious institutions develop, the more that spontaneous, unpredictable, experiences of the ultimate will be reduced and replaced by established religious forms that are concrete, routine and predictable.

O'Dea defines institutionalisation as the 'reduction of a set of attitudes and orientations to the expected' and 'regularised behaviour.'<sup>51</sup> O'Dea (1961) identified five dilemmas that arise from institutionalisation.

Firstly, he observes that pre-institutionalised religious groups are characterised by solitary charismatic leadership, singleness of purpose and a high level of sacrifice by all who are involved. As initial, high levels of selfless motivation weaken, they are replaced by a more complex mixture of motivations. These include the pursuit of economic security, stability, respectability, prestige and power.

The second institutional dilemma identified by O'Dea involves the need to objectify religious symbols and ceremonies. As symbols and ceremonies are formalised the people are increasingly separated from the experiences that initially shaped them. This objectification can aid worship, but it can also become a barrier to an experience of the sacred.

Thirdly, organisational administrative structures help to effectively meet members needs and bring them a sense of security, leads to the elaboration and specialisation of organisations. Unfortunately as the organisational centre grows, people near the periphery of the organisation can tend to feel distanced and isolated.

Fourthly, as institutions reduce the message to concrete, rational terms the emphasis on inner, mystical experiences tends to diminish. The guidelines and rules that delimit the message also remove its sense of other worldly mystery.

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas O'Dea 'Five dilemmas in the institutionalisation of religion' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 1961, 1, pp. 30-39, 32.

Fifthly, O'Dea observes that as religious groups grow, their emphasis on the values of society tends to increase, while the emphasis on religious experience decreases. Secularisation and desacralisation are commonly observed to increase as institutions grow. There is a tendency for leaders of established churches to become isolated from their constituents. The strategies that consolidate an organisations power inevitably decrease the opportunities for the self-expression of members. There is a tendency for the upper classes to be favoured and the lower classes to be neglected.

Dean Kelley observes that mainstream churches tend to become more relativistic and luke-warm over time, and to lose their ability to provide clarity of purpose and an ultimate, other worldly sense of meaning to life.<sup>52</sup> A decline in vitality and attendance is often observed as churches become overly institutionalised. The formation of new religious groups can be seen as a reaction to the process of institutionalisation.

Working class people frequently feel alienated by traditional denominational churches. Hynd suggests that their emphasis on complex rationalism isolates those who seek a more mystical encounter with God and a simple experiential faith.<sup>53</sup> The growth of new religious groups often occurs when large numbers of people find their inner religious impulses remain unmet. The rapid growth of new sectarian groups is further encouraged by the high demands that they place on their members and their tendency to reduce the number of 'free riders.' Strictness makes the new groups appear more credible to their members and brings increased commitment and growth. Established churches that have lower costs and greater acceptance of 'free riders' often show slower growth.

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<sup>52</sup> Kelley, Dean M. *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 37.

<sup>53</sup> Douglas Hynd, *Australian Christianity in Outline*. (Sydney: Lancer Books, 1984).

## ***Decline Questioned***

Secularisation and institutionalisation create pressures within society that require a redefinition of religious practice and community in order that religious solutions continue to work. The emergence of revivalist groups challenge the notion that secularisation and religious decline are inevitable. The growth of revivalist groups provides support for the observation that demand for the transcendent and the *wholly other* remains strong, even in times of rapid modernisation.

Finke, Stark, Bainbridge and Yinger have all challenged the inevitability of decline through secularisation and argue that the evidence for the persistence of religious desire is considerable.<sup>54</sup> They argue that in the American context the decline in established churches due to secularisation has been matched by the birth and growth of new religious groups.

Stark and Bainbridge argue that secularisation is 'a self-limiting process that engenders revival' (sect formation).<sup>55</sup> They observe that decline through secularisation is frequently matched by increased enthusiasm and commitment through religious renewal groups. The processes of secularisation and revival are two forces which act in tandem. They propel cycles of religious change that are ever acting on society. They are part of the ebb and flow of correction and vitality that continue to shape religious development

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54 Stark, Rodney and William Simms Bainbridge. *A Theory of Religion*. New York: Peter Lang. 1987; S. S. Acquaviva *The Decline in the Sacred in Industrial Society*. Patricia Lipscomb (translator) Oxford: Blackwell, 1979, p. 196; Yinger J. Milton 1970, *The Scientific Study of Religion*, New York: Macmillan, p. 21. Harley and Firebaugh said that the most interesting thing about belief in the after life in the United States from 1973 to 1991 is what it was not doing: it was not declining. B. Harley and G. Firebaugh 'American Belief in An Afterlife: Trends over the past two decades,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1993, 32 (3) pp. 269-278.

55 Stark, Rodney and William Simms Bainbridge. 1985. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 230, 429-430. Time and space do not permit extensive examination of their suggestion that secularisation also leads to innovation, i.e. cult formation. It is beyond the scope of this thesis.



through the ages.

Robin Gill's significant work, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (1993), challenges the notion that traditional views of secularisation account for religious decline in the twentieth century. He provides evidence that church decline was due to structural and organisational difficulties in coping with population and cultural shifts.<sup>56</sup> Gill recognises that an exception to decline is found in Pentecostal and charismatic evangelical churches.<sup>57</sup>

The hypothesised religious decline of secularisation theorists failed to account for the rapid growth of Protestant and charismatic Christianity that occurred in Europe, Africa, South America, Asia, the former socialist countries and in one of the most developed countries in the world, the United States of America. It also failed to account for the growth of Pentecostal and charismatic groups.

### **Revivalism**

It is clear that revivalism has the potential to be one of the significant forces counteracting secularisation and institutionalisation. Revivalism has been defined as

A type of religious worship and practice centering in evangelical revivals, or outbursts of mass religious fervour, and stimulated by intensive preaching and prayer meetings.<sup>58</sup>

Revivalist groups are both re-active and pro-active. They react to changes in society and the church by promoting a return to values and practices that they perceive to have existed in the past. Revivalist groups can be viewed as reactionary responses to the processes of secularisation and institutionalisation that are inevitable bi-products of the growth and maturing of established religious organisations. They are a reaction to the tendency in established religious hierarchies to rationalise and objectify the transcendent in order to contain the *wholly other* in their words,

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<sup>56</sup> Gill, Robin. *The Myth of the Empty Church*. (London: SPCK.1993), p. 189.

<sup>57</sup> Gill, 1993, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> F.L. Cross & E.A. Livingstone, (eds) *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 1183.

rituals and beliefs. Revivalists seek to restore less institutional, less hierarchical and more mystical forms of the Christian tradition that more highly organised religious groups try to represses.

Revivalist groups seek to counter the established churches' emphasis on rationalism with an emphasis on individual religious experience including conversion and supernatural healing, miracles, prophecy and glossolalia. Formality in established churches is replaced in revivalist meetings by spontaneity and informality. While established churches spend most resources meeting the needs of middle class adults leaving the lower class and unchurched young people neglected, revivalists, on the other hand, pursue outreach to the lower classes and young people who are responsive to their contemporary methods.

While established churches develop complex, rationalised doctrines, revivalist groups counter this trend with simplified teachings based on biblical allegories and metaphors and uncomplicated, narrative-based messages. They use simple, expressive songs that empower ordinary, untrained, lay people, neglected by established churches. As sociologist, Bryan Wilson observes, 'Inner feeling has been hailed as more authentic than intellectual knowledge.'<sup>59</sup> The complex politics of highly structured centralised, hierarchies and credentialled, highly trained clergymen are replaced in revival movements by egalitarian communities in which the charismatic gifts of each member are valued. Revivalists give greater opportunities for the 'ordinary' participant.

Decentralisation is emphasised by revivalists through the formation of large numbers of small, tightly knit communities that provide contexts for intimacy, support and growth and to provide opportunities for every member to express themselves. The observations by sociologists such as Wilson,<sup>60</sup> and Stark<sup>61</sup> provide

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<sup>59</sup> Wilson, Bryan R. *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1976), p. 37.

<sup>60</sup> Wilson, Bryan R. 1970. *Religious Sects*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 66.

<sup>61</sup> Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Routledge, 1967), p. 126.

considerable insight into the way in which processes such as institutionalisation, bureaucratisation and secularization in the Methodist church engender new revivalist groups such as the COC. Their insights also help to explain the development of these groups and the contribution that they can make to religious change.

Revival movements such as the Reformation, Pietism, Methodism and more recent developments within Evangelicalism can be seen as expressions of an ongoing effort to reverse the effects of secularisation and to restore the place of the supernatural and mystical to life and society.

These movements are also the products of particular historical and cultural processes prevailing at the time of their formation. The twentieth century Pentecostalism and the charismatic revival movements show characteristics that were peculiar to the decades in which they developed. They also continue in the western, evangelical, revivalist tradition and form part of 'a path that involves many turnings but no basic change in direction.'<sup>62</sup>

### ***Church-sect theory***

Church-sect theory has been particularly successful in explaining the development of many twentieth century sectarian developments including Pentecostal and charismatic groups. In church sect theory a church is defined as a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists while a sect is said to be a religious group that rejects its social environment.<sup>63</sup>

Churches are defined as large complex organisations with a long history of investment in the past. As established churches mature they tend to become more centralised, develop a hierarchical administrative structure and rely on professional, well educated ministers, specialised administrators and theologians to oversee their activities. Church leaders are expected to have more training,

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62 Yinger J. Milton *Religion, Society and the Individual* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), p. 283.

63 Johnson, Benton. On Church and Sect. (*American Sociological Review* 28:539-549. 1963), p.542; See also Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension*, (Chicago: McNally and Co. 1965), p. 243.

knowledge and faith than the laity. While this provides stability and credence, it also disempowers the laity and also increases the sense of alienation and distance between the church and its constituents. Dempsey observes that extensive theological training favoured by churches isolates clergy from their congregations and frustrates the clergy and congregation.<sup>64</sup> This frustration contributed to the resignation of a large number of clergy from traditional churches in the late 1960s.<sup>65</sup>

As established churches become more than one generation old their attention and energy is absorbed by the next generation who inherit membership through birth. Fewer resources or energy are available for evangelism. The conversion experience receives less prominence as established churches increasingly define the requirements for salvation through formalised dogma and ritualised services. Second generation adherents inevitably lack the emotional emphasis of first generation adult converts.

While some sectarian groups are characterised by a desire to be left alone, others are motivated by a desire to resist and promote social change. Bainbridge identifies the latter as being particularly important. He says that a sect is

a religious movement [that] is a relatively organised attempt by a number of people to cause or prevent religious change in a religious organisation or in religious aspects of life.<sup>66</sup>

### ***Developmental Stages***

A number of stages can be discerned in the development of revivalist groups. They typically begin as small, obscure protest groups within established churches. Wach notes that the pressures on these 'protest within' groups lead to intense devotional practices

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64 K. C. Dempsey (1969) 'Conflict and Harmony in Minster-Lay Relationships in an Australian Methodist Community,' Ph. D Thesis, University of New England, Armidale, 1969.

65 Norman W. H. Blaike *The Plight of Australian Clergy* St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979, p 32.

66 Bainbridge William Sims, *The Sociology of Religious Movements*. (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 3.

and strong community bonds. He describes them as,

a loosely organised group, limited in numbers, and united in common enthusiasm, peculiar convictions, intense devotion, and rigid discipline, which is striving to attain higher spiritual and moral perfection than can be realised under prevailing conditions.<sup>67</sup>

Such small, ideological groups provide a hot house in which revivalist dreams can flourish. Revival movements initially adopt many of the teachings and practices of the existing churches from which they emerge and this gives them stability and confidence. In seeking to revive experience and the supernatural that they perceive to have been lost they place an emphasis on conversion and activities such as healing and prophecy. Opposition from stakeholders in traditional churches gives the new groups a greater sense of purpose and camaraderie and provides a force against which the groups can unite.

### ***Building the Group***

Most effort and resources in new religious groups are used in meeting the needs of its members. After these initial needs are met, fast growing revivalist groups may have surplus resources and leaders and be able to initiate further groups. Other independent groups may also seek to affiliate with successful sectarian groups. Most charismatic groups remain small and many die out without impacting more than a small number of people. Others such as the COC grow rapidly enough to survive.

Within six years the COC had grown from twenty-five to over a thousand people and had started seven other churches. It also attracted two similar charismatic groups from New South Wales that merged with it. Within a decade it had commenced similar groups overseas. This national and international expansion was aided by the development in the twentieth century of modern transport systems and electronic communications media.

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<sup>67</sup> Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1944), cited in Hill, 1973, p. 76.

## ***Second generation***

The second generation 'established sect' has very different challenges and characteristics from the first. The initial concerns of a protest movement are replaced by organisational and denominational requirements of a large, expanding organisation. An emphasis on cognitive knowledge and group responsibility leaves little room for spontaneous, intuitive actions, emotional expression, supernatural guidance or mystical beliefs. As the group achieves some degree of respectability, conflict with society and other churches will decrease, and the distinctive beliefs and practices are modified. Gerlach and Hine observe that speaking in tongues usually occurs less often in the second generation and they have fewer charismatic experiences.<sup>68</sup>

The need for the training of second generation children, the acquisition and management of property and the achievement of social respectability shape the second generation agenda. As leadership and teaching needs increase a division of labour is required. 'Charisma' is often routinized and economic, political and social needs begin to predominate.

## **New Models Proposed**

Stark and Bainbridge have provided one of the most systematic attempts to provide a new general theory of religion that takes recent developments into account. Stark and Bainbridge's rational choice model<sup>69</sup> views secularisation and religious revival as cyclical developments that repeatedly occur throughout history. A number of scholars including Fink, Stark and Bainbridge argue that 'rational-choice theory'<sup>70</sup> and models of a 'religious economy'

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68 Gerlach Luther P. and Hine Virginia H. *People, Power, Change Movements of Social Transformation* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1970), p. 5.

69 Stark and Bainbridge, 1980, 1985, 1987.

70 Stark, Rodney and Laurence R. Iannaccone. 1994. "A Supply-Side Reinterpretation

of the 'Secularization' of Europe." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33(3): 230-252; Iannaccone, Laurence R. 'Economics of Religion' *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. XXXVI, Sept, 1998, pp. 1465-1496. p. 1468.

are better able to explain religious change and sect development. Our historical understanding is likely to be increased through the recognition of increased consumer demand, freedom of choice and plurality of opportunities in shaping religious developments. They suggest that the constant pressures of institutionalisation and religious desire drive a cycle of secularisation, disenchantment, revival, and religious innovation.

While secularisation theory focuses on consumers, predicting a decline in their religiosity, the newer economic paradigm focuses on suppliers, predicting the emergence of new religious 'firms' that meet consumer demands and increase religiosity. New religious groups arise when neglected members set out to explore new opportunities and to seek out unrestricted pathways to the transcendent.

Religious economic theory assumes that people's innate desire for the transcendent, *wholly other* remains at roughly the same level in any society and at any time of history. It holds that people are essentially *homo religious*.<sup>71</sup> Religious economy theory is based on the notion that rational choice and free competition in an open market of religious institutions are well able to explain changes in religious market share. The theory says that in an increasingly religiously plural society, successful religions must be marketed among competing religious institutions. This competition has encouraged the emergence of new religious groups that revive neglected religious areas, and empower people whom traditional denominations have overlooked. Theorists argue that the actions of church and clergy are rational responses to the constraints and opportunities in the religious market place.

The models proposed by Stark and Bainbridge suggest that as Australia moves from the dominance of established traditional churches and sees the emergence of competing sects with an emphasis on revivalism, higher rates of church attendance are likely to result. Revivalist groups are likely to emerge which aid religious change and a resurgence in attendance. Pentecostal and

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71 R. Finke, and R. Stark, 1988. 'Religious economies and sacred canopies.' *American Sociological Review* 53, p. 41-49.

charismatic revival groups have been unique in that their growth has been so rapid and widespread.

The economic model proposed by Stark and Bainbridge is not without its weaknesses. There is an over reliance on simple exchange theory to explain complex human behaviour and religious belief and the revival and religious resurgence are not inevitable. Their use of the terms 'compensators' and 'rewards' emphasises immediate material concerns and negates the existence of mystical, other worldly realities.

Their theory also over emphasises the similarity of widely divergent religious groups and religious motivators. While Stark and Bainbridge's theory has been successful in expanding our understanding of religious life, it gives insufficient consideration to the incorporation of economic practices of the surrounding society into the life of churches and sects they describe, nor does it consider other examples of churches and sects that do not fit their model. Despite these weaknesses, the Stark - Bainbridge theory provides a useful and testable model for religious development and it provided a wealth of insights into religious history.

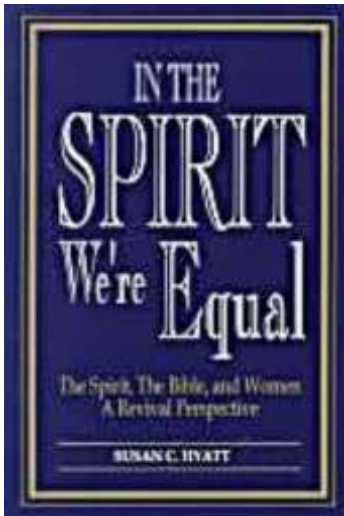
### **Implications for ministry**

Churches have too often been confused as the nature of the challenge that they face from the surrounding society. Many have assumed that declining numbers are inevitable and that their needs are best met by resisting change. If the church and ministry are to remain effective they must recognise that secularisation and institutionalisation are dulling the impact of their message. Churches need to see themselves less as bureaucratic organisations and more as organic structures in which all members and their tasks are valued. Churches today need to recognise that religious desire remains strong, but that people are seeking religious expression that is able to compete with the many other demands placed on them by a changing society. The religious message must be expressed in contemporary terms. Only as church leaders understand the nature of change in society will they be equipped to communicate their invaluable, unchanging message to a rapidly changing, but needy world.



## *Reviews*

These book reviews include three on revivals published by Australians, and one by Susan Hyatt related to articles in this issue of the *Renewal Journal*.



*In the Spirit We're Equal: The Spirit, The Bible, and Women - A Revival Perspective*, by Susan Hyatt (Dallas: HyattPress, 1998).

*In the Spirit We're Equal* challenges our thinking about biblical womanhood, as does Susan's report, "Women and Religions", an article in this issue of the *Renewal Journal*.

"Susan Hyatt has an important message to convey: the Bible teaches an egalitarian relationship between men and women which was confirmed at Pentecost. This volume is a valuable resource offering insightful understanding of the 'real issues', namely those of power and control," says Professor Elizabeth Clark of the UK.

Susan Hyatt emphasises the following themes in her book.

What do Pentecostal/Charismatic people need to know about

biblical womanhood and how might this theology be imparted to make a vital difference in the lives of God's people? This question arises in the context of the twentieth-century Pentecostal/Charismatic revival in which a biblically sound, historically informed, Spirit-sensitive theology of womanhood is needed to counter the Church's traditional theology of womanhood and its hybrids.

Whereas the traditional theology, an hierarchical model, has a record of oppressing women, a Pentecostal/Charismatic theology, an egalitarian model, states that women are equal with men in terms of substance and value, function and authority, privilege and responsibility.

The starting point for such a theology is the message of Jesus as revealed by word and deed in the gospel record. This harmonizes with the revealed will of God in the biblical record, particularly in the writings of Paul and in Genesis, accurately interpreted in terms of authorial intent.

This theology is also in harmony with the activity of the Holy Spirit, particularly in revival history as observed in movements such as the early Friends (1650-90), the early Methodists (1739-1760), nineteenth-century revival movements in America, and the early Pentecostal/Charismatic Revival (1901- 1907).

The Christian belief system must be constructed on the foundation of Jesus' teaching and the Bible, accurately interpreted and confirmed by the activity of the Holy Spirit in history. This is important because the practical implications of how people think theologically about womanhood affect everything from the fulfilment of the Great Commission to the issue of self-worth and to a myriad of topics in-between. Clearly, the Church needs a way of thinking about womanhood that will result in biblical behaviour by women and toward women in all venues of Christian living. This book explores that option.

This book offers men and women an opportunity to renew their minds according to the revealed will of God about half of the Body of Christ - the female members. Traditionally we have not done this,

yet the Spirit is moving in our day to bring our thoughts in agreement with the will of God in many areas, including how we think about womanhood.

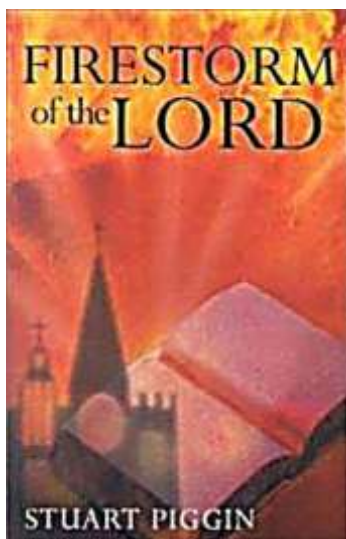
Susan Hyatt shows how this is important for many reason, not the least of which is the fact that, as we mature in Christ, we are to think more like him, and he taught that we are all created equal and unique before God.

It is also important that we renew our minds regarding womanhood because Jesus commanded us to go into all the world - to men and to women of all tribes and nations - teaching them to obey *all* that he commanded. If we are not teaching his truth about womanhood, are we truly obeying the Great Commission?

As important as this is, however, we have a more important calling, and that is to know him. As we abide in him, he gives us assignments. But these assignments are only causes and must never displace the call. The cause is not the call.

Susan observes: "One of the assignments God has called me to - much to my surprise - is to work with him to reform the way we think about womanhood. God is wanting to answer the prayers of his people who are crying out for more - for more of him, for more revival, for more souls, for more! His answer is coming to us in the opportunity to reform our thinking about womanhood. He is asking us to come into agreement with his way of thinking about womanhood. If we embrace it, we become deeper and wider channels for The River to flow deeper and wider into all the earth. Won't we take the limits off God in our lives and in the Church?" (GW)

A Study Guide and teaching course using this book is also available from Hyatt Ministries,



***Firestorm of the Lord* by Stuart Pigginn.**

Paternoster & Open Book, 2000.

Dr Stuart Pigginn's book makes scholarship on revival readily accessible with clear principles well illustrated from history, including recent history. He writes as a renewed evangelical, unafraid to embrace the strengths of renewal and to warn against its weaknesses. Australian readers will welcome his extensive use of our own stories of revival.

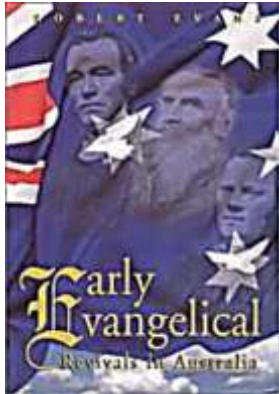
Stuart's work as Master of Robert Menzies College and Associate of the Department of History at Macquarie University in Sydney includes being Principal of the School of Christian Studies and of the Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity. He incorporates this rich research culture into his book.

The back cover summarises his approach and content:

Drawing extensively from the theology of Jonathan Edwards and Martin Lloyd-Jones, Stuart Pigginn offers a systematic, biblical and pastoral study of revival. He writes from the head and heart, with plenty of lively illustrations and real-life testimonies and quotations. Pigginn defines revival, looks at its biblical basis, identifies the marks of genuine revival and studies the phenomenon thoroughly across historical and denominational lines. After laying his groundwork, Pigginn offers much valuable and practical advice for revival. Finally he explores the possibilities for God's choosing to work in such a way again – in the next grace awakening. Revival, he insists and proves, is a firestorm of the sovereign Lord through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This book will enrich the library of any college, student or pastor, and provide ample material for evaluating a wide range of revival movements and phenomena. Stuart rightly emphasises the

centrality of Jesus Christ and his redeeming triumph on the cross in all things, including revival, when many people repent and find eternal life, or as Jesus said, have life and have it more abundantly. (GW)



***Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia***

by Robert Evans.

Open Book, Adelaide, 2001. 553 pages.

Reviewed by Dr Dean Drayton

This comprehensive study of surviving published materials about evangelical revivals in Australia covers the period 1776 to 1880.

Robert Evans has taken the initiative to place in reader's hands reports of evangelical revivals in Australia. Gallons of ink have been spilt telling us about revivals in other parts of the world. Indeed for a long time it was believed that there had been no revivals in Australia.

There have been many revivals in Australia. The distinguishing feature is that most were local. As Evans points out, Australia has never had a sustained revival involving many local congregations.

I have always been fascinated by the times when people became so aware of the presence of God that they were able to live with a new perspective for their life, a God centred perspective. While at Salisbury in South Australia, I had the privilege of being present in a congregation when there was a time of renewal and conversion. Once tasted this is never forgotten.

Having seen the reality of changed lives, one hopes the Church may discover we live in a time when the dam is empty, but flooding rains are on the way. The proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord has been the source of life giving floods of grace in many places across our country. Here is direct evidence. We need now to grow the

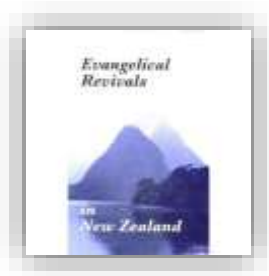
expectation that the Holy Spirit has more than what we have received or accepted as the source of transforming power in human lives.

This book gives mostly the Methodist perspective up to the year 1880. Only the Methodists seemed to have documented such events in that period. Beyond 1880 the perspective widens into other denominations partly because other congregations discovered what could happen with special weekends and preachers opening up again the fountains of God's holy love.

Here one discovers the importance of times of prayer and preparation, and the amazing accounts of the influence of California Taylor as he preached through the various states of Australia. Robert Evans gives us a thoughtful analysis of the way as time passes the tendency is for the means of revival to come to centre stage rather than the message of the gospel itself.

One may ask, 'Have revivals had their day?' As one reads this book one discovers that the form of God's renewal changes from age to age. The question comes, 'What is the way we can see again the power of God experienced in the life of ordinary folk?' This book clearly sets out to let us know what has happened, to grow in the reader the expectation that God can do new things in our midst. So, Holy Spirit surprise us, make us aware of your presence, bring us to our knees with the wonder of knowing you in our midst.

Available from Open Book, or through Christian bookshops.



***Evangelical Revivals In New Zealand*** by  
Robert Evans & Roy Mckenzie.

Reviewed by Jeff Haines

If you are concerned about what God is doing in New Zealand, or about revivals, or if you want to consider New Zealand church history from a different perspective, then this is the book to challenge your thinking and move your heart towards God's desire to see his people revived and the nation awakened.

This is the sort of book that has been needed for some time. We have read about what God has done through revivals in many lands and now we have a well written history which reveals what has happened in revivals in New Zealand.

I have studied revival in New Zealand for some time now and I pleased that the authors have captured the essence of each historical period. It is also the authors desire that this history will spur others to discover more fully the events surrounding the times, places and people involved. The extensive bibliographies at the end of each chapter give plenty of scope for further study.

The book covers these three sections:

Introduction – which gives a clear definition of revival (a word which has many different definitions), and describes the purpose of the book.

Part 1 – A history of revival in New Zealand. It has 14 chapters which cover the history of revival from 1814 to the present.

Part 2 – Some basic principles of revival. It discusses the many principles of revival including the need for our involvement, social implications and theological aspects.

*Evangelical Revivals In New Zealand* is historical, theological and practical. It is refreshing to read a book that presents the many dimensions of revival in an easy to understand manner. The history

is enriched by the theological reflection on revival.

Anyone interested in revival, and in the church in New Zealand should obtain a copy of this book. You will discover what God has done in the past, learn the lessons of history, and take advantage of the practical advice plus the help offered in this book. It will stir you to pray for God's sovereign move in revival again.

\$25 from the author Robert Evans, PO Box 131, Hazelbrook, NSW 2779 – [bobevans@pnc.com.au](mailto:bobevans@pnc.com.au) .



*Renewal Journal*  
*19 Church*



*Geoff Waugh (Editor)*

***Renewal Journal***  
**19 Church**

## ***Contents***

### ***Renewal Journal 19: Church***

Editorial: Church Now	307
1 The Voice of the Church in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century, by Ray Overend	311
2 Redeeming the Arts, by Sandra Godde	327
3 Counselling Christianly, by Ann Crawford	339
4 Redeeming a Positive View of Sexuality, by John Meteyard and Irene Alexander	351
5 The Mystics and Contemporary Psychology, by Irene Alexander	363
6 Problems Associated with the Institutionalisation of Ministry, by Warren Holyoak	379
Reviews	389

#### **Cover Photo: 19 Church**

Initial baptisms among Enga tribes in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

# ***Editorial***

## ***Church Now***

Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is changing. Previously the rate of change has been gradual, spanning many generations. Now change is rapid in all areas of society, including the social expressions of “church.”

Charismatic renewal and revival continue to powerfully transform church and community life. Home groups, cell groups, interest groups, and mission groups proliferate. They can thrive without budgets, salaries, or church buildings.

China and Africa lead the world in radical expressions of being the church – often without church buildings, salaries, and traditional services. Latin America provides increasing examples of community transformation and Christians celebrate together in fiestas and all night united prayer and worship festivities. Local governments often underwrite the cost of these celebrations because of the enormous impact for good they have on the whole community.

This issue of the *Renewal Journal* explores some growing edge challenges emerging now in being “church” in the new millennium.

Ray Overend finds fresh hope for “The Voice of the Church in the 21st Century” because secular university culture is beginning to change and throw bright light on the very foundations of Christianity, and on just why the Church has lost spiritual authority in the world.

Sandra J. Godde, Founder and Director of Excelsia Dance Company, calls for Christians in the Arts to give the church a prophetic voice in her publication, “Redeeming the Arts: visionaries of the future.”

Ann Crawford examines the presuppositions and processes that distinguish Christian counselling from other forms of counselling in her article, “Counselling Christianly: implications for pastors and church-based counselling professionals.”

John Meteyard and Irene Alexander engage in “Redeeming a Positive Biblical View of Sexuality,” showing how human sexuality and spirituality are very close to another, both dealing with intimate relationship, deep desire, and being known for who we truly are. They outline theological principles for a positive and integrationist perspective for human sexual experience and expression.

Irene Alexander explores the relationship of “The Mystics and Contemporary Psychology” to show how the mystics experienced God’s reality in the depths of their being and have often passed on profound truths that can enable us to be close to God.

Warren Holyoak examines “Problems Associated with the Institutionalisation of Ministry” particularly the difficulties imposed by hierarchical structures, inappropriate distinctions, and inappropriate roles in leadership and ministry.

Most of these articles were presented and discussed at the 2002 Contemporary Issues in Ministry conference held at the School of Ministries of Christian Heritage College in Brisbane, Australia.

The Renewal Journal Publications in the 21st century include inspirational books on renewal and revival on [www.renewaljournal.com](http://www.renewaljournal.com). The books continue to explore inspiring stories of renewal and revival. Here is another.

### **Miracles in PNG**

Matt Ransom tells of the beginnings of new ministry for Charlie Kape.

*I have to tell you of the amazing story of Fr Charlie Kape, a Papua New Guinea Catholic Priest.*

*In Feb. 1998 he visited our church, St Thomas the Apostle Canberra, to take part in a school of evangelisation. At the same time a number of revival meetings with being held with Randy Clark and his team. Fr Charlie got absolutely blasted as a result of Randy's ministry and went back to PNG full of God's FIRE.*

*The day Fr Charlie returned, he was at a meeting and he prayed with a woman with a broken arm. Her arm was instantly healed. The next day he was asked to go and visit a man with tuberculosis, he was bedridden. He too was instantly healed.*

*As a consequence crowds began to seek him out, and again many were healed.*

*At one meeting, Fr Charlie was in an area where he didn't know the language. So he spoke in tongues. All the people understood him speaking to them eloquently about Jesus Christ.*

*Early in 1999, he organised the procession of a cross around his part of the country, to evangelise people. It ended at Port Moresby, the capital (and ravaged by violence and poverty). The procession travelled through an area where any cars that travel are held up, and many killed. The young men who conducted these crimes were touched by the worship, the cross and the message of Jesus. As a consequence, 50 turned to the Lord, handed over their guns and weapon, and stopped their violence.*

*There have been no holdups in that area since. The police superintendent went to visit the young men, burned up their criminal records and invited the young men to become police cadets. 30 said yes!!!!*

*Fr Charlie has also suffered much attack. In June of 1999, he was attacked by a group of young men. One attempted to pierce him with a sword and another bashed him with a sword. He ended up in hospital and showed us the scars in his head.*

*He has a lot of support from his Catholic church and is training up his people. But he needs our prayers.*

*Finally, Fr Charlie told us how at one powerful meeting of 3000 people, at one stage, he felt to extend his hand toward the people. As he did so, power came from him. People just fell over under the power of the Holy Spirit, and many were healed. (he didn't even lay hands on them). Praise God.*

# ***1 The Voice of the Church in the 21st Century***

**Ray Overend**



**Ray Overend lectures at Christian Heritage College, Brisbane**

**A new breeze blows through secular academia**

In 1993 John Carroll, Reader in Sociology at Melbourne's La Trobe University, brought out a book (published by Fontana in London) called *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Civilisation*. In it he said that the time that Europe put man on the throne instead of God was the time from which Western civilisation began to decline.

Since then postmodernism (the fragmentation that follows humanism) has made an even bigger impact on the sanctity of marriage, on corporate ethics, on liability insurance...in fact on the whole spectrum of private and social life. Western civilisation—founded as it was on the philosophy of the church—is being destroyed from the inside out! Satan too has exploited the weakness of his prey by launching devastating attacks like September 11 and Bali.

Yet in the midst of the postmodern chaos has sprung up from within the secular world—indeed the academic world—the beginnings of a spiritual revolution! Just last year John Carroll brought out a new book called *The Western Dreaming: The Western World is Dying for Want of a Story*. Carroll, is right now teaching his students through a mixture of concepts, stories and paintings. Secular university culture is beginning to change! Indeed it is beginning to throw some bright light on the very foundations of Christianity, and on just why the Church has lost spiritual authority in the world.

In Chapter 2 of his 2001 book John Carroll says that the Magdalene story in the Gospels is one of those great expressions of Christian worldview that, traditionally, set the direction of European culture. He says that the 20th Century left us without any such story—except for the Princess Diana story, which has, he believes, an interesting, if minor and hidden, parallel with the Magdalene story.

I do not agree with all of Carroll's insights into the Magdalene story (if you read his book you will be equally surprised at a few things he says), but to meet such a recognition of spirituality and godliness in a prominent 21st Century secular academic must surely be a signpost to encouraging times! Let's read the original story in Matt. 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, Luke 7:36-50 and John 12:1-9! We can leave aside the scholarly debates about the details and recognise simply that there was a sinful woman whose childlikeness of heart struck a chord in the heart of God. Following church tradition Carroll believes that the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in the home of Simon at Bethany was Mary Magdalene. He believes that she was also the first to meet the Risen Christ.

### **The wisdom of the Magdalene story**

Whoever she was, the woman who anointed Jesus in the home of Simon was totally overcome by the wonder of God in Jesus. The importance of the story to Jesus is proclaimed in his words, "I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her." (By the way, how often do we tell the story?) Let me set the scene as Carroll imagines it, taking some of his imagery, as he does, from a



Raphael painting:

The scene is Magdala, a fashionable resort town by the Sea of Galilee where rich Romans and Jews own luxurious villas, a town known for its urbane morals and religious tolerance. Jesus has accepted the invitation of Simon, a pious local Pharisee who is intrigued by him. He lounges Roman-style at one end of the triclinium couches that border the banquet table on three sides. Simon reclines opposite, his feet being washed by a servant.

There is a commotion among the servants at the villa entrance. Suddenly, the dozen or so other guests around the table are startled to observe a woman bursting through, and gliding her way quickly and silently to stand behind Jesus. The colours of her velvet dress dazzle the stately marble columned room, a flowing ruby patterned with deep-green leaves, and green sleeves extravagantly fluted, embroidered with gold. One of its loose shoulders has slipped down, exposing silky olive skin. She wears gold bracelets, and red toenails draw attention to bare feet. In spite of the casual restraint of a yellow ribbon, auburn hair spills abundantly down her back. Fiery dark gypsy eyes flash around the room, then settle.

Jesus senses her close behind him—he has been watching the wide-eyed stare of Simon tracking her, the host pale and stuttering with rage. Now he looks around and sees this unknown woman sink to her knees, tears from lowered eyes streaming down her cheeks. He recalls noticing her across the street on his way here, how she had suddenly looked at him and stopped, as if she had seen a ghost. She must have followed him.

She is bent low, loosening her hair, which cascades down, obscuring her face. He feels the tears splashing onto his dusty feet, which gentle hands caress, hair wiping them, then being kissed, then wiped again. She never looks up, and he sees her mouth hanging open in voiceless anguish, so pained and empty that she wants to sink out of existence, at the shame of what she has done with her life.

Was it miracle or curse, that infinitesimal speck of time in the street when her eyes were opened? The instant that changes a life,

catching her unawares, has been like concentrated acid dropped on tender skin, the more caustic for him having been no more than the mirror. He senses her fighting against a huge weight of humiliation crushing down on her drained and tainted body.

One hand fumbles to find some hidden pocket, from where she produces a small alabaster flask. She uncorks it, and pours rare and costly perfumed oil onto his feet, tenderly massaging, regularly on impulse breaking her motion to kiss them. Tears continue to flow from bloodshot eyes. The large, airy room is filled with the powerful fragrance of myrrh, enough

to induce a dreamy intoxication in the guests if their host's darkening mood had not infected them.

Jesus recovers from his surprise. He concentrates, bathing her in his own meditative gaze. Now he knows her, and his own mind. Meanwhile, the resentment of Simon spears at him across the table, the host mumbling under his breath that if Jesus were who he claims to be, he would know the immorality of this woman. And to let her touch him!

So Jesus turns to face Simon and poses a riddle. A man is owed money by two others—one owes five hundred denarii, the other fifty. Neither had anything, so he forgave them both their debts. Which one will be more grateful?

Simon tentatively replies with the obvious answer. Jesus tells him that he has judged rightly, but turning to the woman, he launches into a stern rebuke:

*Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: hut this woman hath anointed my feet.*

*Wherefore I say unto thee: Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*

Simon flushes bright red with humiliation and rage and confusion. From the moment this gutter slut violated the sanctity of his home, he has been subject to insult upon insult. The great teacher whom he invited in as his guest of honour has offended him, in front of his closest friends and most prestigious associates, all intrigued to meet the rumoured miracle worker. This so-called holy man now indulges that notorious whore's excesses as if he were one of her after-dark visitors. Not only that, but he makes fun of Simon by posing him a riddle so simple that any schoolboy could work it out, yet punishes him for solving it. Then he questions Simon's hospitality, which has been proper, it is true, but then this is a God-fearing household that wastes not. And how can the servants be expected to proceed normally with their washing duties when chaos descended from the moment of Jesus' entry?

Worst of all is the confusion. Simon is an intelligent man, well read, and practised in discussion. He prides himself on his scrupulous understanding. Jesus has just reversed the logic of the riddle, which had love following from forgiveness, with the more that is forgiven, the greater the debt of gratitude. Moreover, the teacher had repeated that logic in his last utterance. But he has deliberately baffled them with this scandal of a woman, forgiving her *because* she loved. How can that be: has he got it the wrong way round? In any case, we know the nature of her love.

This dear woman who anointed Jesus was totally overcome by the wonder of God in Jesus. It broke her heart and she cried uncontrollably as she *saw* divine love. God loved her, even her. But what is unique is the purity of her love. Humanly we cannot possibly explain it. Many people talk about the depth of her gratitude to Jesus for God's forgiveness. But it seems that the divine beauty in the story is that she loved Jesus before she knew anything about his forgiveness. Yes her heart would receive. But she had not come to Jesus to ask for something, even though it would have been appropriate to do so. Her love was transcendent. It was worship. She didn't want in any way to "possess" God. She was utterly captivated by the wonder of God in Jesus. She gave her heart to God. And there was not a spark of self-consciousness about her love. It was utterly childlike. Simply, she was blown away. The disciples would do anything for Jesus, but Jesus had this woman's

*heart*. I personally am still discovering the depth of this. Her attitude was *Theistic!* Yes, it was transcendent.

### **The joy of reflection**

During the 20th Century, the culture of much of the world's cities lost—transcendence! In some cases the church lost transcendence! Some people do not have a philosophy. Many people, even some Christians, choose not to be reflective. They don't ask "big" questions. They don't ask "why" questions. They don't get a "big picture" of life and creation, let alone of God. Some people—yes even some Christians—have no conscious philosophy of life. We are going to Heaven but we don't really know what for! Our life can be guided by certain quite unconscious and never examined presuppositions!

Gaining a reflective understanding of Christian worldview enables us to enter fully into the discovery of divine love. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." How many Christians in ministry spend quality time simply beholding the presence of God? Is God more important to us than ministry? Is God more important to us than evangelism and mission? Is the beauty of our relationship with our wife more important to us than our ministry?

This special woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, in opening her heart to pure love, saw God in Jesus. Seeing the wonder of God's glory and feeling the wonder of God's mercy and love, she never even thought to say sorry or plead for forgiveness. She was too far down in her life to try any religious tricks. She knew that, within her, there were no answers. But the presence of Jesus captivated her. She was so lost in the love of Jesus and in the vision of God's purity and truth that her heart simply broke to pieces in a cloudburst of tears. She was totally overcome, transformed and anointed in God's Spirit (yes, before Pentecost). Her spiritual lights were turned on and she saw God! Heart was plugged into heart. In a staggering moment she saw that God created us first for relationship. I think that is what the story is really about. Unlike Simon she had no religion to overcome.

So is *relationship* at the centre of our Christianity? Is relationship

for the sake of relationship the cornerstone of our worldview? Nothing else will bring the full anointing of God's Spirit upon us. Nothing else will bring spiritual authority to the church. I submit that Carroll is touching on the very reason why the church has so little credibility in today's world.

Those who take time out to be *reflective* will discover a music to life that transcends the wonder of anything they have ever known! We must allow God, by his Spirit, to develop us in philosophical reflection! God wrote the New Testament in Greek and (I suggest) he planted some of the first Gentile churches in the Greek culture because the Greek people were reflective. In the market place they would sit and talk for hours, in the ancient equivalent of today's coffee shops. (The Greeks of course also worked!)

Above all else, Christianity means *encounter with God*. Knowledge without encounter means nothing. But, on the other hand, the most vivid encounter in the Spirit, without a God-given philosophy of life, leaves us almost stillborn. When we talk with people, what do we talk about the most? Do we empathise and *discover* the person in the person, and the wonders of God in the person? Or do we talk most about the things that we *do* (which of course need to be talked about too)?

### **Our Australian culture**

The conductor of a well-known French symphony orchestra was asked (on ABC FM by Margaret Throsby) how he would like to live in Australia. He said (quite uncritically) that most Australians (including professionals) spend much of their spare time servicing their house, garden and cars. He owns none of these.

He lives in a rented apartment in central Paris. Instead of spending their money on the facilities of a busy suburban culture, his wife and he relax and dine every night down on the boulevard with friends, rejoicing in people, life and creativity. He said that it is in this quietly reflective atmosphere that his music receives its soul and inspiration.

## The meaning of life

What does Christ show you to be the *first* purpose of life? Yes one sentence that keeps coming back to me lately is the three-word sentence in 1 John 4: “God is love.” The verse doesn’t say “God loves”, which he does. Rather it says *God is love*. As we *walk* with Jesus and enter into the heart of God, so our heart becomes a little like God’s heart. How could a wonderful piece of music be born of anything but inspiration that comes from divine love?

So all creativity is meant to be inspired by the heart of God—everything from building houses to teaching to running a business or governing the nation. Whatever the practical outcomes—and there must be practical outcomes—nothing has ultimate meaning unless it is birthed in divine love and divine inspiration. Everything in life is meant to flow from our relationship to God! This is true biblical Theism. Talking even of the physical universe Colossians 1:17 says that, “in Christ all things consist.”

That is of course why 1 Corinthians 13 implies that what we *do* is not as important as who we *are*. In our Australian culture, many (but by no means all) Boomers (particularly men, and that is somewhat natural) find their identity in what they do. But many of the X generation, and more especially of the Y generation, have questioned this worldview. And, thinking of seniors, well, the standard ‘grace’ for food was often “Bless this food to our bodies, Lord, and us to your service!”, as if at any moment of the day life was first about service. In a course last year one student from overseas shared how in the church in which she grew up, Christianity, as she had heard it, was about two things, *belief* and *service*.

Yes, we are saved only ever by the grace of God, and through our personal belief in the death and resurrection of Christ. But the great commandment begins with the *heart*, and then adds mind, and soul (life) and strength. And John Carroll’s book *The Western Dreaming* is a wake up call, not only to the contemporary culture but also to the church. The Twentieth Century demythologised the heart of our culture. We no longer dreamt visions or saw beyond the stars. Let me tell you a story of a Year 11 student at a weekend

Christian schools conference for 11 and 12 students.

At the end of an evening session I invited my group (we were looking at Christian spirituality and philosophy) to wander outside into the vast and beautiful grounds and just, individually, find a spot and do nothing! Next morning I invited some sharing. This Year 11 girl said:

It was really painful. I've had a very full year. I love activity, and, sitting there last night, I longed for something to do. I really hated doing nothing, and it got worse, but I was determined to stay there, doing absolutely nothing.

After a while I glanced up and, through the clearest air I'd ever known, I saw a sky like no sky I had seen before. I was overcome by the sheer beauty.

I so began to enjoy the wonder of it all that I could have stayed there for hours. To my amazement I was actually enjoying doing nothing. I had come through something like the pain of the long distance runner.

But then something even more amazing happened. As time went by, in the joy of the stillness, somehow my eyes went beyond the stars. God opened my spiritual eyes and—I saw God.

May I encourage you to stop and look up!

We can be so preoccupied as Christians that we clearly see neither God nor the people in people. And, because we sometimes have no philosophy, we simply get driven by the secular culture around us! So we must discover the wonder of stopping. We must look up. But, too, we must *reflect* upon life! We must become philosophical. We must inspire one another to reflect! As a Christian culture we must become more philosophical! And, as God has it, you and I now live in a world that is searching for meaning as never before. It is a culture too that is crying out for meaningful relationship, for genuine friendship. A new coffee shop is birthed every four days in Brisbane. In fact in the CBD alone there are one hundred—bustling with *relationship*. And, increasingly, movies (from *Mr Holland's*

*Opus to Chocolat* and beyond) are reflecting the worldview that, while achievement is essential, ultimately, relationship is more valuable than achievement.

Do you recall in *Mr Holland's Opus*, this big-hearted music teacher frustrated because he could not help give and give his time to his students of music, even to the seemingly hopeless, yet, because of it, could never fulfil the ambition of his life to complete the writing of his orchestral symphony? Then you will remember that, some time after Mr Holland had to leave the school, he was invited back to hear an amazing orchestral performance. The story of the movie closed with the words from the students, "We are your opus!" This movie, like *Chocolat*, is typical of the emergent culture in Western cities.

The coffee shop culture only came to Brisbane in the 1960's, but by the 1860's in Vienna there were already one hundred coffee houses. By the end of the 19th Century—the finale of the Romantic and Idealistic periods in philosophy, literature, music and the arts—"the Viennese coffee house blossomed into a place where highlights in Austrian culture were written, conceived, drawn and discussed. In particular it was said of the Cafe Central that it was 'not a coffee house but a worldview.'" (From *Edition Skye*, published by Felicia Oblegorski, Vienna)

But if you think some of this talk about ultimate meaning is fanciful for 2002, listen to Danah Zohar who lectures at Oxford University in their Strategic Leadership program! In a recent book called *Spiritual Intelligence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000) Zohar says:

The major issue on people's minds today is meaning. Many writers say the need for greater meaning is the crisis of our times. I sense this when I travel abroad each month, addressing audiences from countries and cultures all over the world. Wherever I go, when people get together over a drink or a meal, the subject turns to God, meaning, vision, values, spiritual longing. Many people today have achieved an unprecedented level of material well being, yet they feel they want more. Many speak of an emptiness [inside]. The 'more' that would fill the emptiness seldom has any connection with formal religion. Indeed most people seeking some spiritual



fulfilment see no relation between their longing and formal religion.

What *you* see as the most important thing in life defines your worldview. Is it friendship with God? (Do you *give* God friendship?) Is it friendship with others? Is it your creativity? Is it your career? Is it your ministry? Yes, all of these things, and more, are vital. But the priorities you and I set day by day, and the order in which we place them, define our worldview.

Life demands the continual anointing of God's Spirit. No amount of philosophy in the human sense will bring us to divine truth or divine love. No amount of unanointed reflection will take us anywhere. But because God *is* love and *is* truth, *in his fellowship* we can feel true love and *in his fellowship* we can see the truth behind all truths. Humanly, this will always remain a mystery. Our mind is like a magnificent violin. Of itself it cannot make music. But in the hands of an artist it expresses love and truth. The spirit within us, plugged into the Spirit of God, is the artist.

### **A practical definition of worldview**

In our cities there are some very well known chains of hairdressing salons. The hairdressing leaders who run these groups of salons have a certain philosophy for recruiting and training staff.

Periodically a chain will advertise for applicants to attend a kind of "discovery" and "selection" week at their headquarters.

On the first day the facilitators will divide, say, 100 candidates into small groups. Then one by one in each group the applicants will share where they are from, a brief story of their lives to date, the things in life that excite them most and their dream for their future. Then in their groups (perhaps over coffee) the girls will engage one another as they "discover" their newfound friends. The experienced facilitators will, in one day, select out those girls who *enjoy people*. Of course we all enjoy people, in a sense. But the hairdressing leaders are looking for those who spontaneously *empathise*, that is, those who enjoy other people *for themselves*, that is, those who find it a joy to "discover" the wonders of other people and therefore who make those other people feel good. In other

words, the hairdressing leaders are looking for those candidates who spontaneously and unselfconsciously *love* other people. This is the first criterion in selecting candidates for training.

Tuesday begins with those candidates who have passed the first and most important test. The facilitators explain that the salons are not first about cutting hair. They are first about *relating to people, about giving something to people*. Then on this second day the facilitators, through a new series of activities, “pick out” those girls who *spontaneously love being creative*. There is still no emphasis on ability in cutting styling hair. On this second day the leaders want to know who spontaneously *loves* playing music, or arranging flowers, or designing clothes, or who spontaneously *loves* the skill and beauty of playing tennis. The facilitators have ways of selecting those applicants for whom creativity has *meaning* in itself. They are looking for people who just *have* to create, people who *spontaneously* love being creative.

So summing up so far, applicants who naturally empathise with others and whose hearts also love creativity, these people will make good hairdressers for the salons—provided they pass one more test.

In the third stage of the week, the job of the facilitators is to discover who amongst the remaining candidates prefers tennis doubles to singles, who prefers playing flute in an ensemble rather than playing as a soloist—in other words, who, amongst all the candidates, is more excited by participatory creativity than by being alone in creativity. The sound that an ensemble creates is far more than the addition of the individual sounds of the instruments. Music goes into a higher dimension as instruments of different tones play in harmony. And the leaders in hairdressing know that when people are happy *together* in creativity, an atmosphere is generated that is uniquely wonderful.

So, in the way I have described, a selection is made of hairdressing candidates. The chosen ones are then taught the salon worldview—and hairdressing. The salons are not first about hairdressing; they are first about people. I am not saying that leaders’ eyes are not on money. Of course they are in business. (And business is as much in

promoting the purchase of hairstyling products as it is in cutting, shaping and colouring hair.) But these leaders in their field see that business is more than money. Another “get rich” book came out in 1999 by an extremely successful businessman, Brian Sher, called *What Rich People Know and Desperately Want to Keep a Secret* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan), in which we learn that, if money is our first goal, we will never make much money! There has to be a higher purpose.

The approach of the hairdressing leaders I have described represents a growing awareness in Western society, and certainly in Australia, that there is a higher dimension to life than what modernism and postmodernism proclaim.

Let’s now think of the three things for which the leaders I’ve talked about are looking for in their candidates. First a *heart* love for others, a true sense of empathy. When a woman comes into a hairdressing salon, what is she looking for?

The contemporary woman, of whatever age, is looking for more than a hairstyle. She enjoys unwinding. She enjoys being able to talk with someone who takes an interest in her, who likes her for herself, someone too who is outside her “circle”. She also enjoys being pampered. She enjoys the atmosphere, where all the girls are having “fun” in what they are doing. They enjoy life; they *enjoy* styling hair.

In short, they *enjoy* looking after you! They appreciate you as a person, not as a mere customer. You are welcome.

When a girl or woman first enters a good salon, a hairdresser will approach her, introduce herself and offer her coffee and a comfortable place to sit. Then, in an empathic but very unthreatening way, the girl will ask her a few key questions. “Have you had a good week?” After a short time the hairdresser has a “picture” of what makes this woman tick.

When the client comes to the chair, the hairdresser asks her about a style. If it’s her first time in the salon, she is probably looking for an “uplift” from what she has been getting. She might say, “I want

something different, but I don't know what!" The hairdresser (who knows something about her by now) will open a book of styles, flip the pages and say, "How do you like *this*?" Chances are the woman will say, "That's fantastic; let's try it!" During the process of having her hair done, the conversation (never imposed) develops. The client feels "cared" for. She feels that somebody *values* her. Many women in our society, though they have family and may have many friends, are inwardly lonely.

Finally the client looks at the finished style. It's transforming. She steps outside feeling like a new person.

### **A holistic philosophy**

Now these hairdressing leaders may or may not know it, but they are seeking to express some of the foundational keys in the biblical worldview! Implicitly they acknowledge that the first purpose in life is relationship—a *giving* of one's self to others. Secondly, the purpose of life includes a *giving* of one's self to the creating of things that are good and true and beautiful. Thirdly, the unity of hearts is a special joy in creativity. And these three things cover exactly what Genesis shows to be the *purpose* of life.!

I am not of course saying that God's anointing rests on the salons I have described. But, through what John Stott and others call the 'common grace' of God (as distinct from redeeming grace), there is some measure of spiritual light in everyone born into this world. (John 1:9)

I have taken some time to open up part of the worldview of some significant hairdressing businesses. Such a worldview we don't always teach in practical terms in our churches! It gives us a real life illustration of a major part of the heart of the biblical philosophy.

Our secular roles on earth are not simply "stewardship", though they involve that. At a higher level, all creativity—even the driving of a truck—is a ministry of love to God and to others.

## Spirituality in secular dimensions

In her 1998 book *An Authentic Life* (ABC Books) Caroline Jones records the most significant of her *Search for Meaning* interviews. Very early in the book come these remarkable but deceptively simple words from Australian writer and cartoonist, Michael Leunig:

I watched a man making a pavement in Melbourne in a busy city street: the concrete was poured and he had his little trowel and there was traffic roaring around, there were cranes and machines going, and this man was on his hands and knees lovingly making a beautiful little corner on the kerb. That's a sort of love and that's important, that's very, very important. That man's job is important and he's a bit of a hero for doing it like that. So that's why love is important, because love involves that as much as it involves what happens between people. It's about one's relationship between oneself and the world and its people and its creatures and its plants, its ideas. (*An Authentic Life*, p2,3)

It seems that the man with the trowel rightly saw what he did as a celebration of life. You and I know that all true creativity is a celebration of—God. This is a form of love. Ecclesiastes 3:11 states that God has set eternity in our hearts. What does this mean? As well as living in the space-time world, we are already, every day, connected with eternity, through God's Spirit!

When we love a beautiful flower we are actually loving not only the flower, but also God in the flower. As in speaking of eternity in time, this is metaphorical language, but do you get the message? When the man with the trowel loves the beauty of what he is doing, he is loving God in that beauty. A hairdresser said to me just the other day, "I *like* cutting hair!" Although this gifted hairdresser may not know it, this is spirituality.

So while all of our creative joys and responsibilities on earth are part of our stewardship, they are actually more than that. Ultimately our creativity is part of our love for God. In the highest sense, all secular work is born out of relationship. And this explains why our huge corporations based on humanism are falling apart!

And, although Christian, some churches are now suffering from the same disconnectedness.

### **The prophetic voice of the Church**

Professor David Tacey, another academic from La Trobe University, in his 2001 book *ReEnchantment*, challenges the church to see that it will never impact the world for as long as its philosophy contains a humanistic dimension. He says that people do not want to hear about a God “up there” unless they can see a God “in here” (in our heart).

I submit that the fragmentation around us in today’s world is a wake up call for the church to see that everything in life must be born out of relationship. Proverbs 11:11 declares that the lives of those in tune with God bring God’s blessing “upon the city”. As God’s people walk with God and allow a biblical philosophy to dictate priorities, then, and then alone, will revival come upon the church. It is our hearts and our lives that hold the key to revival, not our ministry (much as ministry is needed). Out of revival in the church would come a new prophetic voice to the nation.

With the new yearning for spirituality that our culture is embracing, Australia could see a revival in our nation transcending anything we could imagine!

## *2 Redeeming the Arts: visionaries of the future*

**Sandra Godde**



*Sandra Godde is the Founder and Director of “Excelsia Dance” based in Brisbane, Australia. “Excelsia Dance” is comprised of a Dance School and a Dance Company that seeks to bring heaven to earth and to become a prophetic voice to the nations.*

### **Overview:**

- I The Challenge
- II A Call to Action
- III The Prophetic Task
- IV Strategies for War: A Battle Plan
- V Barriers to Overcome as Artists who seek God’s Glory
- VI The Final Battle for the Arts

### **I The Challenge**

Where is Christ’s voice in the arts and culture? Who is bringing the Word of the Lord to this generation? Where are the Christian

artists, visionaries, film-makers, musicians, actors, dancers, and television producers?

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men" (Matt 5:13, see also Mark 9:50). Beloved, it is **time to know** the majesty, the sovereignty, the creativity and the power of our awesome God.

We are in great need of leaders who have a vision for the kingdom of God, a vision that inspires the creation of images and artistic works that will lead people toward Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us, "You are the light of the world" (Matt 5:14, see also verse 15,16). The level of peace, joy, compassion, or justice in our world depends very much on whether God's people are showing it to the world. All of the arts have tremendous subliminal power to affect cultures and shape history.

The church has, for the most part, underestimated and misunderstood the importance of the arts as a medium for the Spirit of God to usher in his kingdom. It is God's ultimate purpose to bring all kingdoms (even the performing arts arena) under his rulership. Scripture tells us "You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him" (Heb 2:8). And God promises us that he will reign over all things in the future: "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he will reign forever and ever" (Rev 11: 15b).

Artistic expression is a part of life. Art in all its forms is pervasive and an essential element of our environment. The works of significant artists are powerful and influential. They often guide and instruct the culture in which they are birthed. Artistic works can weaken or destroy the civilisation in which they were created.

The arts can enlarge or trivialise the imagination. Therefore the arts are not neutral; they impact us, and we need to be aware of what they are doing. Art inescapably affects us. Even unworthy



forms are always making their impact on society. So what are we, as believers, going to do about this fact? Our place as Christians in this world is meant to be an active one that affects our generation.

We are in a battle for the hearts and minds of people on a global level. We are being bombarded on every front, especially through the media, with images and ideas that are anti-God. Have you ever asked yourself why Harry Potter and endless movies about the supernatural are allowed to take such a stronghold? Has the false theology of religiosity deterred the artist and the visionary from the midst of contemporary Christian culture, leaving big holes for the enemy to stake his territory? Have we made the mistake of defining ourselves only through negatives? What do we stand for? Are we providing a true creative alternative to the culture of our day?

## **II. A Call to Action**

God has called us to redefine the enemies' boundaries. "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8b). We are to be on the offensive in establishing God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Song, dance, drama and the visual arts are capable of being some of the greatest offensive weapons we have in the body of Christ. In a highly audiovisual generation that is becoming increasingly multimedia oriented in its language, God desires to pour out his divine creativity to captivate the imaginations of this generation. He needs willing and devoted vessels to do so. Worshipping warriors are required for the job. Prophetic evangelism is the way of the future.

We have a responsibility to participate in the affairs of humanity in a positive way, to the glory of our Father. The world should be aware of our presence in the earth (Matt 5: 16) and reap benefits from our very existence as Christ's ambassadors on earth. The promise to Abraham was that he would become a great and mighty nation and in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 18:18).

So we must ask ourselves, how are we serving our generation and leading the way to life and godliness through Jesus Christ? We must understand that there is a spiritual element to all human affairs and history. When God's people are apathetic and do not intercede or stand up for what is right, evil is allowed to gain control of a society.

As Christians we are to be concerned about the fundamental issues of life and the moral and physical condition of our society. What was going on in the spiritual realm during the tragic events of September 11, 2001? What was God saying in the aftermath when many stopped to listen? What is the Lord saying today – to you, your family, your community, and your nation? Beloved, we need to **know** something of the heart of God regarding these issues if we seek to be relevant to those around us.

### **III The Prophetic Task**

The prophetic task of the arts is to break the silence and speak the truth. It is to let the world know that Christ is alive and he is not silent. So, what does God require of us? Micah 6:8 tells us “.... to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”. By our obedience we can help establish justice. By our boldness and our devotion to Christ we can unveil injustice and oppression and expose social, political and religious evils.

We can preach repentance to win people back into right relationships with God, and with one another. We can speak of his endless love and mercy. The prophetic task also involves energising God's people by offering them God's version of reality: His perspective is the ultimate reality.

We can only know this by His Spirit and through prayer and the study of His Word. We can show God's possibilities through faith; offer God's hope in hopeless situations; and encourage people to walk in new levels of obedience and abundant life. By following the ways of God there is indeed the possibility of real justice, love, acceptance, forgiveness and healing. There is a great need to restore God's people to fullness of life and implant a living hope within them that will withstand all the storms of this life.

The means of mass communication is expanding and what is transmitted through the air waves is vying for your attention. We need to continually pray that God would raise up an army of creative artists and visionaries to lead the way back to the Lord and to conquer and outwit the enemy in his plan to steal the hearts and minds of this generation. We have a mandate to be the voice of God and speak his truth to our own generation. Our message must embody what God is doing now and proclaim what God is saying to this generation. His love endures forever and His character is utterly consistent but He is also creative and unpredictable in the way He reveals Himself. We need to be constantly in prayer to know the heart and mind of God and to be able to know and implement His strategies.

The arts can indeed be on the front-line in global evangelism, winning hearts and minds to Jesus Christ. The enemy of our souls understands the importance of creativity and uses it to compel mankind to rebel against God. Are we going to allow millions of young people to fall under the spell of the Dark Prince? How can we prevent this? We need a vision of the infinitely, superior, awesome Creator who sings a much sweeter and deeper and purer song to captivate our hearts and our souls.

Beloved, has not God promised his children power to transform their society by calling into question the world's ideas and philosophies (Rom 12:2)? We have been given spiritual weaponry to bring down every thought and idea that exalts itself above the knowledge of God. We **need a vision** of the awesome, loveliness of Christ; the earth shattering power of a holy God; and the universal power of the cross of calvary. Where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov 29: 18).

The eternal plan of God is the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth (Eph 1 :9-10). In the times to come, creativity and boldness will exemplify the front-line in the battle for mankind. And it will be the people who **know** their God that shall be strong and do great exploits to the glory of God (Daniel 11 :32b). The reward of the harvest will not be for those that sleep or doubt or criticise but for those who turn to God with a glowing faith and allow Him to be all in all.

#### **IV Strategies for War: A Battle Plan**

Our objective is to take the gospel to all people throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. We must constantly refocus our attention to make sure we are on track. We are to win people to Christ and help them become obedient to all that God has commanded. Battles are won when we concentrate our efforts rather than dissipate our energies in too many directions. So seek God for your place in His plan and then be careful to obey all that He shows you. Remember that God has a body of believers and we are all to play a significant part in His overall plan.

Security involves knowing about your enemy and having continual protection against him. It also means having a final line of defence past which the enemy cannot penetrate. For us, this is the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. I believe there are very specific powers and principalities that have controlled the performing arts arena for a long time, and we need to identify what these are and advance forward to conquer these ruling authorities and dislodge them from the high places of power.

We can't afford to waste time and energy fighting the wrong enemy, for example, criticizing and competing with one another. It's time to know the real enemy and expose him, for our fight is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers in the spiritual realm (Eph 6:12).

#### **V Barriers to Overcome as Artists who seek God's Glory**

The following ideas are taken from Scott MacLeod's book entitled ***Snakes in the Lobby*** in which he documents a vision the Lord revealed to him regarding the state of the Christian Music Industry and the powers that were seeking to weaken their witness to the world. I believe they apply equally to the whole performing arts arena. Let's now look at the enemies of our soul with the purpose of identifying and uprooting that which is holding us back from being all that God intended for us to be as artists. In order to reflect the glory of our Father we need to be cleansed, purified, and yielded to God so we can mirror His eternal nature.

Scott MacLeod's vision entailed a lobby full of Christian artists talking and networking with each other and also showed a plethora of snakes which represented different powers or spirits that were present, drawing people away from a pure devotion to Christ.

The largest snake was SELF PROMOTION. This snake inspired his victims with a hunger to be bigger and bigger. His influence seemed to be ubiquitous. This could be otherwise stated as SELF INTEREST, an excessive longing to be known and recognised by others. It is the main barrier between us and God's kingdom. It is the striving to establish our own kingdom instead of building God's kingdom. I believe that to overcome this very deep, magnetic pull that we all struggle with, requires a very deep and real knowledge of God's love for us personally. When we understand *who he is* and how infinitely superior he is to us, we can rest in his love for it is more than sufficient for us, and we are content to be hid in the beloved, and then we concentrate fully on building *his* kingdom, having been fully convinced of his worthiness and greatness. Our own need is met in him.

The second snake to appear was LUST. This was the charmer, the chameleon, changing colours and appearance according to the desires of those under its power. This snake had a hypnotic quality, drawing in its victims by deceptive flattery with the promise of gaining attention and power for themselves by drawing upon his power. Again, this snake appeals to the self-conceit in all of us and must be resisted by reckoning ourselves dead to self and self interest.

The next two snakes were intertwined with each other and they were PRIDE and INSECURITY. These spirits are characteristically found together and cause their victims to vacillate between the two.

One minute they are puffed up with pride and self importance and the next they are wallowing around in the dust with a woeful self-image. Both extremes are ungodly and lack humility. These spirits of pride and insecurity bring misery to those ensnared by them and unfortunately it is hard to break loose from them because pride won't allow the victim to admit any kind of weakness, insecurity, or feeling of failure. Humility and contriteness of heart is the key to

deliverance from these strongholds. Humbling yourself before Almighty God will allow you to receive a healthy self-image based on God's Word and a reverential fear and respect for The Lord of Hosts.

The next snake to appear was THE FEAR OF PEOPLE. This spirit caused its victims to only be concerned about who was who and how they were being perceived by others. It is a very nervous and agitated spirit that ensnares the one it holds in its power. It is a spirit of bondage that leads to death as the fear of man prevents us from rightly fearing God. It often causes its victims to be paralysed with fear. The remedy to the fear of man is to fear God – to have a revelation of the holiness of God that causes you to reverence him.

On the roof of the lobby was yet another snake called JEALOUSY. This is the spirit of envy that causes its victim to bum up inside with fury and covetousness. It attacks the high places because it wants these high places for itself. It spurs one on with a competitive spirit which is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

There were other smaller snakes hovering around the periphery of the room. They were bitterness, criticism, unforgiveness, self-pity, and self-righteousness. All these spirits cause spiritual blindness and make us helpless and vulnerable to the enemy's attack. This vision was revealed to show us how we all unknowingly can fall under the powers of the Great Serpent.

The most respectable snake to appear was the SPIRIT OF RELIGION. This snake had a thirst for power and control and included many of the other qualities of pride, insecurity, lust, jealousy, self-promotion, fear of man etc. They were all hidden in this big white snake. It is the spirit of self-righteousness and religious pride, an insidious and deceptive power that creeps into the church from time to time. Unchecked this spirit will lead to a spirit of murder. It causes people to do evil or tolerate it, and all along believe they are doing right and even doing God's service.

Later the SPIRIT OF DEATH made an appearance and caused its victims to be overcome with despair and hopelessness. It causes people to give up, to lose faith, and can result in suicide or other

self-destructive behaviour. It can only be overcome with the blood of Jesus and his resurrection power.

Now, we are all probably familiar with these spirits because they have sought to overcome us all at various times. God, in His mercy, reveals these things to us that we might understand and know the poverty of our own spirits and turn to him with utter dependence and reverence. Our gracious Lord reveals these things in our own hearts first, so we can uncover all that is contrary to faith and walk in his light which is the truth that will set us free. God's conviction comes so as we can choose him and be free from our sin, our self-life, and this world. Being cleansed by his blood and appropriating the power of the cross delivers us from all this wickedness and anti-God sentiments that try to control us.

Humility is something we are required to cultivate. Don't ask God to humble you – humble yourself under His mighty hand. Humility leads to grace and grace leads to real love and compassion for others who are still spiritually blind. The true light of God's piercing Holy Spirit renders all other powers inoperative. These snakes are not afraid of you when you are hiding in your own darkness and deception but when you confess the sin in your heart and turn from it, God's holy presence takes over possession of your soul and sin cannot survive in that environment. Then, you are equipped and prepared to face the outside enemies.

Serpents don't engage with you in battle when they see you are properly clothed in the armour of God. They are scared of the blood of Jesus and the Word of God spoken with faith. Your faith and fearlessness is terror to them because they know of their condemnation by the righteous judge.

Therefore, to walk in the authority needed to resist evil, one must be fully surrendered to God.

Let love and truth conquer you first before you venture out to conquer spiritual territory for the cause of Christ. You cannot do it on your own. You cannot do it without Him. Learn to allow God to live in you and make his abode in you. Learn to love as the Father loves. Can you love your enemies yet? Can you bless those who

curse you? Can you forgive those who have offended you? Are you careful to preserve the bonds of fellowship within the body of Christ? Don't attempt to do the work of God without the power of God. Let Christ have his way deep in your soul, transforming your character into His likeness, and equipping you with power from on high.

## **VI The Final Battle for the Arts**

The present reality is that the prince of darkness is operating like the Pied Piper in the performing arts realm. He is the power behind a large portion of the music and video industry seeking to shape people's perception of reality according to his anti-God sentiments and his hatred for the saints of God. There are many ensnared by the hypnotic trance of this prince that was once the covering worship angel of God. But now Lucifer has become Satan and his perverted gifts have brought him down to earth with a fury. His goal is to obliterate anything precious to Almighty God who has become his arch enemy.

Many follow God's enemy, singing the songs and doing the dances of Babylon. The ways of the world are opposite to the ways of God. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you (1 John 2:15). Even many of the sons and daughters of God have chased after the creativity of the world and are now under the curse of the prince of the power of the air. They have become the tail and not the head. They have stolen glory for themselves and not given glory to God. They have used their gifts for their own gain, worshipping and serving worldly things like prestige, popularity, money, music and dance. They have coveted the praises of people instead of the approval of God. They have had divided hearts. They have left their first love. And God is grieved.

God is looking for worshippers in spirit and truth. His eyes roam the whole earth looking for hearts that are perfect toward him. The Pied Piper is hungry to keep his spiritual territory because he knows the tremendous power of music and the arts.



Beloved, the Lord is calling us to “come out of her”. The Lord is calling His artists to come out of Babylon, “the ways of this world”, and tap into the infinite, creativity of the true and living God.

The Lord is calling all those who have ears to hear to stand before the presence of the Living God, and drink in his revelation and wisdom and inspiration to take the Word of the Lord and feed it to the people, lest they perish under the spell of the Dark Prince. God is looking for people to be his voice. Are you willing? I believe we have to understand what it means to fear God, to walk in his wisdom, to hear his voice, and to speak it boldly and without fear.

The Holy Spirit is wanting to inspire his people with songs and dances of deliverance, healing, and comfort. When we tap into the inspiration that comes from heaven through prayer, our creative works bring life, and connect people spirit to spirit. People can then taste and see that the Lord is *good*.

All of creation groans for the sons and daughters of God to arise and take their proper authority in the earth by allowing the Lordship of Christ to rule their lives and take over their wills. True worship involves all of our beings and all of our faculties. It is a matter of Lordship – unashamedly declaring Christ as Lord of all. We are transformed as we worship. The Holy Spirit of God brings genuine love in our hearts for others and a sense of community and harmony with one another.

When we seek God for our creativity and inspiration, he charges us with new energy; when we wait upon the Lord, he renews our strength and causes us to rise up on the wings of an eagle. The song and movement of praise and rejoicing in heaven is contagious. There is no fear, no self-consciousness, no inhibitions or bondage. Praise frees us.

Spiritual strongholds are demolished, walls of hostility and division fall, resentment, bitterness and unforgiveness cannot breathe in the atmosphere of heaven and praise. God restores our soul. We begin to laugh and dance and sing like carefree children again. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor 3:17).

God is calling forth an army of worshipping warriors who have first conquered the battle in their own hearts and unequivocally given the reigns of their lives to Christ and are ready and willing to follow the Master's bidding. Soldiers must be obedient. They must be trained, disciplined, and ready to follow commands. The call comes forward from heaven "Let my people go" so they might worship me in spirit and truth.

We must disentangle ourselves from this world, from self, and from sin and be wholly aligned with the purposes of the Most High God. Then a powerful and unified army of holy warriors will emerge all over this earth to cover it with the Word of God and the good news of the gospel. Then he will Come! Christ will return. But not before his gospel is spread all over the earth.

Music and art are primary ways of communicating within our culture. Art is a language that transcends barriers of age, religion, sex, politics, etc., and reaches to the heart. It is a language that uses images, symbols, colour and sound to evoke universal responses from our psyche. We cannot afford to dismiss this means of communication. Our enemy certainly has not.

The anointed arts are one of the most powerful evangelism tools the Lord has given us. May his artists, filled with the inspiration of heaven, the power of the Spirit, and the glory of God resting in their characters, carry the message of the gospel and the presence of our Lord to every corner of this earth. Who will stand and volunteer for the job?

**Reference:** MacLeod, Scott. 1998. *Snakes in the Lobby*. Morning Star Publications, Charlotte, NC. U.S.A.

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### 3 *Counselling Christianly*

#### **Ann Crawford**



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#### **Counselling “Christianly”: implications for pastors and church-based counselling professionals**

*This article examines the presuppositions and processes that distinguish Christian counselling from other forms of counselling, explores some of the issues raised including ethics and training, and makes suggestions as to how such a model of counselling may be applied to church-based counselling.*

Traditionally, counselling has been considered by people in Western culture to be an element of the pastoral function of the church. Whether the person considers themselves “religious” or not, it is the priest or minister who is available at times of birth, marriage, death, grief, when relationships breakdown or when a crisis strikes. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that most seminary training includes very little counselling theory or

practice. Collins (1988) comments on these seminary courses in pastoral counselling stating that they “tend to be more people-centred and relevant, but even here the student (and sometimes the professor) may be lost in a mass of theories and techniques that are not very useful when one is face-to-face with a confused, hurting human being”. (p. 21). Often well meaning people in the church, in their desire to help, can actually harm people or hurt themselves through lack of training and knowledge. Issues of confidentiality, dual relationships, power and control can also create ethical dilemmas and spiritual abuse is just as real as physical and verbal abuse.

Over the last twenty years or so, interest in “inner healing” or “prayer counselling”, which is often labeled “Christian counselling” has arisen, particularly among the lay people of the church. Although these methods have been seen at times to have achieved very positive results, these practices have caused considerable dissention within the church. Fouque (2000) expresses concern: “a Christian, who engages in a healing relationship without the skills necessary to recognize these powerful processes, can fail to maintain the integrity of the therapeutic encounter” (p. 204).

More recently, in the twenty-first century church, counselling is experiencing a growing credibility, leaving clergy grappling with the dilemma of how best to minister to the physical, emotional, intellectual, relational and spiritual needs of their people who are seeking counselling as never before (Lukens in Sanders, 199, p. 43).

“Pastors, many of whom never felt adequate to the task in the first place, have often turned their counselling role over to the professionals” (Mangis, 2000, pp. 259-260). This author also comments that “individual believers often come to Christian psychologists with the express belief that ‘since you are a Christian psychologist, you will be able to help me with my emotional life and my spiritual life at the same time’” (pp. 259-260.). Although this situation may appear to be fraught with danger, Johnson (1997) sees this era of the church to hold previously unknown opportunities for the Christian psychological community and he encourages them to become “immersed in Scripture and the Christian tradition” (p. 22.). In this way, he sees that Christian psychologists “may be enabled to discover new facts and theories,

devising new lines of research to more accurately understand the human nature the way it really is, the way God sees it". (p. 22).

Several interesting factors are emerging from the growing acceptance of church-based counselling services.

- ◆ The large number of hurting, damaged people, both inside and outside the church, who are open to counselling.
- ◆ The relatively small number of thoroughly trained professionals who desire to or are free to counsel Christianly.
- ◆ The willingness of pastors (particularly of large churches) to refer their people to "specialists" for counselling.
- ◆ The considerable potential for a church-based counselling service, using both physical resources (buildings etc) and the more subjective assets (church-community support) to successfully meet the needs of church members, Christians from other churches and people from the local community.

Hunter (2001) argues, "we need a 'theologically informed psychotherapy'. But we also need a distinctly pastoral, therapeutically informed art of spiritual and moral counsel" (p. 22).

## **Presuppositions**

However, to be truly well informed both theologically and psychologically, the person who desires to counsel Christianly requires a framework that examines and analyses such presuppositions as those derived from worldview responses to the questions of; what is humankind? What is reality? What is God? What is right and wrong? The answers to these question shape not only the Christian counsellor's way of counselling but also their way of being. A clearly defined picture of the structure of personality forms another part of this framework. The unique tenets of belief of Christian theism, allow the Christian counsellor to see facets of the human person that may well be missed by a less spiritually aware therapist.

As this framework of Christian counselling develops, the purpose and desired outcomes of therapy are other factors to be considered in the light of theology as well as psychology. An analysis of these outcomes from the perspective of the client, the therapist and postmodern society presents a more realistic and comprehensive

position for the Christian to counsel Christianly .

### **The Therapeutic Process**

The next concern of the Christian counsellor is to develop a method of counselling that will not so much integrate the principles of theology and psychology as carefully examine the very fundamental presuppositions of both these disciplines and create a model that has firm foundations, allowing for both professional, ethical counselling practice and theologically sound, pastoral counselling practice to come together effectively. The therapeutic process employed to achieve these desired outcomes, the therapist's role, the client's experience and the therapist/client relationship are all vital components to be explored.

### **Theological Issues**

An important element of the framework of a Christian counselling model is an exploration of the historical relationship between Christian counselling and psychology. Although in recent years the polarised positions traditionally taken by psychologists and theologians have begun to find a meeting place, the legacy of this struggle still effects the status of professional Christian counselling today. McMinn (2000) sees the integration of these two disciplines as an epistemological challenge. On one hand, psychology "is deeply rooted in a scientific epistemology (p. 251) while on the other hand, "Christian theology is bounded by central doctrines, forged over centuries" (p. 251). He continues by observing that those who have been most successful in this integration "have learned to value both epistemologies" (p. 251). The implications in this debate for pastors and professional church-based counsellors could well be contained in this assumption.

Another lively debate that impacts this study is the delineation between Christian counselling and pastoral care. The differences, the similarities and the overlaps in these occupations make defining these a controversial matter. The increasing interest of psychology and counselling in the spiritual aspects of the person has, in effect, pushed the Christian people-helper into the spotlight. For the church, whose mandate is to "heal the broken-hearted" and "release those that are bound", this can be seen as a God-given opportunity

to fulfil this mandate powerfully and effectively and the roles of counselling-pastor and Christian counsellor are gradually emerging into the arena of professionalism. However, as with any emergence, this progress is not without pain.

The Christian counselling professional is beginning to come to grips with the changes that are required for this transition and many of the mindsets and religious traditions of the modern era are being carefully examined in the light of scripture and scientific knowledge, giving rise to policies, codes of practice, training programs and academic learning that satisfies, not only the Christian mandate but also the professional credibility. From the theological perspective, Williams (1996) sees that the role of the church is both that of evangelism and the meeting of the needs of the people. He sees the danger of extremes – “evangelism *or* social action” (p. 153). He continues, stating the theological position he holds by saying, “This does not mean an equality between the gospel of salvation and the ‘social gospel’, for the gospel *is* the message of salvation and must have priority. However, the meeting of other human, social needs must not be neglected” (p. 153).

Zinnbauer et al. (2000) discusses the meeting of these human, social needs. “To offer distressed individuals more than simple empathy or medication, it is necessary for counsellors to base their work on theoretical orienting systems”. (p. 163). For Christian counsellors, the theoretical systems available may not always be acceptable or appropriate. Eclecticism is the obvious solution to this dilemma. The general consensus of the literature on eclecticism in therapy would seem to point to a generally positive response from therapists and researchers provided the eclectic approach has a system. However, it would also appear that a thorough knowledge of a broad range of therapies is a requirement of a true eclectic therapist. Silverman (2000) also sees more “sophisticated matching studies to formulate conceptions of the right therapist for the right client in the right context as opposed to the right technique for the right problem” (p. 312).

Bridger and Atkinson (1998) observe that “the Christian

(counselling) scene is dominated by all kinds of eclectic approaches” (p. 7) which, in their opinion, eventually “collapse under the weight of their internal contradictions” (p. 7). This inevitable collapse, according to these authors, can be attributed to an “uncritical acceptance of presuppositions drawn from a variety of sources” (p. 7). The inference of these writers would seem to be that, with critical attention to presuppositions and underlying philosophies, a truly eclectic model of Christian counselling is possible. This reasoning is substantiated by much of the research already cited in this chapter which supports eclecticism with the proviso of a comprehensive structure to build upon.

### **Counselling Christianly**

Johnson (1997) expresses what is perhaps the essence of the findings of this paper when he writes, “the Christian psychological community is set free to chart new territory in psychology” (p. 22). He then continues, “Christians in psychology must do more than simply contribute to the field of psychology as it is. They have an obligation to God and to his people to work towards a psychology that is thoroughly consistent with a Christian framework” (p. 22). Maybe the territory is not “new” (Solomon proclaims that “there is nothing new under the sun” [Ecc.1:9]) but it is certainly uncharted. As outlined in the introduction, this paper has set out to “address the presuppositions and processes that distinguish counselling in a Christian way from other forms of counselling, explore some of the issues such as ethics and training and make suggestions as to how such a model of counselling may be applied to the church-based counselling situation”.

Having explored the presuppositions, processes and issues, I will endeavour to synthesise some of these findings and apply them not only to good professional practice but also to the components that make Christian counselling Christian.

### **Presuppositions**

For the Christian counsellor, the presuppositions must begin and end with the Word of God. This is the benchmark, the blueprint for the construction of reality, truth, the knowledge of right and wrong and the structure of personality. The postmodern worldview apparently is the antithesis of Christian theism. However, scholars



have pointed out that, despite the diametrically opposed philosophies regarding truth and reality, both postmodernists and Christian theists agree that truth and reality are constructed – the postmodernist sees constructivism as being the product of the human person’s own experiences while the Christian theist recognises that God, through his living Word, is the constructor of the individual’s reality and truth. This understanding gives the Christian counsellor an ability to find a place in a postmodern world that enables him or her to successfully dialogue with clients using their own discourse and thereby facilitating a relationship that encourages change.

Likewise, presuppositions based on the very foundational biblical beliefs of “the fall of man” as found in the first three chapters of Genesis, lead Christian therapists to base their practice on the footing that the human person is made in the image of God but is sinful in predisposition. That people are accountable for their behaviour, are capable of repentance and can be forgiven by the God against whom they have transgressed, opens an avenue of freedom for the Christian therapist to explore that is not available to a theorist who chooses not to access the promises contained in God’s Word.

A Christian counsellor also has the conviction that the human being is made in the image of God; known intimately by a loving, Father God; created by him with a plan and a purpose; and destined for an eternity in joyful relationship. Counselling in a Christian way must therefore be unique in the ability of the therapist to be able to encourage the client to exchange the “facts” of their life (e.g. their being unwanted, valueless, a victim etc) with the “truth” as ordained by God (e.g. their being made by God in his image, valued as such, etc).

The internal belief system of the client can be exchanged rather than reprogrammed; and the story not reconstructed but replaced by a narrative that has resolved the dramas of past; has the strength and strategies to walk through the joys and trials of the present; and looks to a conclusion full of hope, a narrative that always includes the presence of God.

## **The Therapeutic Relationship**

The goals of Christian counselling are to encourage the client towards change of non-productive or dysfunctional lifestyles. However, for the Christian therapist, the story does not end here. The wholeness and holiness of the client is the transcendent goal of counselling in a Christian way. Therefore, as this therapist “connects” with the client he or she is confident that the therapeutic interventions used, the subjective dynamic of the counselling relationship and the active involvement of the Holy Spirit will combine to meet the needs of every facet of the human person – physical; emotional; intellectual; relational and spiritual.

## **The Therapeutic Process**

The outcome of the theology versus psychology debate has far reaching consequences for church-based counselling in the twenty-first century. The fruit of the long and arduous struggle by committed Christian professionals of the last century can now be seen as both the clergy and the mental health practitioner, in increasing numbers, are finding a place of agreement, or at least compromise. This opens doors, not only for the psychologist to consider the validity of the spiritual, but also for the Christian counsellor to explore the many fascinating discoveries researchers have made and theories scholars have developed in all fields of human behaviour and counselling. A new breed of Christian counsellors is emerging as more and more mental health researchers undertake both qualitative and quantitative projects. These empirical findings, coupled with documented subjective or spiritual experience provide knowledge and techniques to increase both effectiveness and efficiency in many areas that are applicable to counselling in a Christian way..

In line with the research into eclectic counselling practice, there seems to be a feasible case for an eclectic model of Christian counselling. As one of the requirements of eclectic theory as outlined by researchers was a sound theoretical structure, the Christian model, based as it is on the firm presuppositions of Christian theism, would seem to fit the criteria from the eclectic perspective. This serves to widen the lens for the Christian counsellor and provides more keys with which to unlock the hidden places of people’s lives and see them set free.

This “widening of the lens” is also being seen in the areas of pastoral care and pastoral counselling. We live in a world where specialisation is increasing in many places both within and outside of the church. Although many pastors, especially those from large churches, do not have the time for long term counselling, it is more than busy-ness and even the threat of litigation that persuades pastors to refer, or use a person or team of people, both lay and professional, to minister to the people in various areas and at different levels of counselling. Church leaders are beginning to utilise diagnostic tests to ascertain where the strengths and weaknesses of their congregation lie and many pastors, especially in the charismatic church, tend to be stronger in the more evangelical areas. This leads us to the area of competency and training.

Whereas secular counsellors and those Christians working in private practice are required to be registered through their respective associations, Christians

who counsel within the church, whether they be counsellors or pastors often do not seek registration. This leaves the individual organisation to train and deem as competent their professional and lay counsellors. With the increasing cry for counselling, there is a corresponding need for more counsellors who counsel the Christian way. This would indicate that, not only is counsellor training a priority but policies and procedures to assess the competency of those already counselling is also necessary.

### **Implications for pastors and church-based professional counsellors**

If the twenty-first century church is to continue to grow both in size and influence, it will embrace the cultural shift that began in the latter half of the twentieth century. This is a time when, rather than being catapulted into the postmodern paradigm, thoughtful Christians are seeking training in many fields of specific pastoral care, including counselling. There is a new awareness of the need for training in the area of ethics to prevent, even inadvertent, misconduct by lay counsellors or professionals.

The time is ripe for large churches to begin to establish professional counselling departments – not just to provide for the needy but to

reach out to couples in conflict, those in grief , depression, anxiety and addictions. There are many other “broken-hearted” who are beginning to tentatively reach out for counselling as never before. Those with sexual addictions, those involved in homosexual lifestyles, ones who struggle with anorexia and many, many more. It is obvious that, to provide excellent care for these people with the long term goal of wholeness and holiness, counselling training in these specialised fields is essential.

It has always been the mandate of the body of Christ to be the “people helpers” of the brokenhearted and troubled of this fallen world. It is time for both lay people and professionals to become equipped to take up this mandate with confidence and skill, to have an understanding of what is required of a counsellor, of the standard of character and integrity that is expected of a person in this role and to have knowledge of the moral and legal responsibilities. Added to this is the essential expertise in the technique and theory of counselling and adequate supervision. All these elements combine to make a professional counsellor but those who counsel Christianly have the added dimension of continually seeking to become Christlike.

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## ***4 Redeeming a Positive Biblical View of Sexuality***

**John Meteyard and Irene Alexander**



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Human sexuality and spirituality are very close to another – both have to do with intimate relationship, both have to do with deep desire, both have to do with nakedness – being known for who we truly are. Often human brokenness is especially evident in these two areas. Sadly, the Christian tradition has often taken a very negative view of human sexuality. This paper attempts to outline several theological principles that could form a more positive and integrationist perspective for human sexual experience and expression. In particular the relationship between sexuality and spirituality is examined and several possible ministry applications of such an approach considered.

## **The Importance of Sexuality**

The Bible is very up front about sex, sexual temptation, sexual fulfilment, sexual sin. On the one hand our society is soaked in sexual images and on the other we still don't really talk about it openly and freely.

Genesis 2 makes it clear that we are sexual beings. When the pharisees asked Jesus about divorce his answer was 'Divorce is not God's idea. God's idea is that we are male and female and that we marry and become one flesh.' God is up front about the fact that we are sexual beings. And that being sexual is good. It was only after the sixth day, after he had made them male and female, and told them to multiply that he saw 'that it was *very* good'. Some cults have a twisted idea that the sin in the garden was a sexual one. The Bible does not suggest any such thing.

God could have made us angels without sexuality, he could have made reproduction occur as it does in the plant kingdom, he could have made mating as quick as it is in the animal kingdom. He didn't - he gave us bodies that enjoy beauty for the eye, music for the ear, food for the tongue, touch for our bodies. He made us sexual and intercourse ecstatic. He gave us bodies and expected us to dance!

So our sexuality is part of how God made us. It is part of our identity. Part of how we relate. Part of how we experience our humanness and our world. Part of what energises us.

## **The relationship Between Sexuality and Spirituality**

In their book, *Authentic Human Sexuality*, Jack and Judy Balswick (1998) suggest that the intricate connection of human sexuality and spirituality is one of six basic biblical principles that underlie authentic and godly sexual understanding and expression (p. 37). MacKnee (1997) goes so far as to suggest that the two lie so close together that it may not be possible to arouse either our sexuality or spirituality without arousing the other (p. 216)! In a fascinating disclosure sex-therapist David Schnarch (1997) relates how in his work both his own spiritual consciousness and that of many of his clients have been heightened and aroused (p 391). What then is it that connects these two most basic and important aspects of our



humanness?

First, it is important to recognise that both sexuality and spirituality are primarily and deeply about connection and communion. Comiskey (1988) argues strongly that at its core human sexuality is not a lustful, seductive exercise. Indeed our sexuality arises from a God-inspired desire within each of us to break out of isolation and aloneness and relate deeply and intimately with another. Thus, even as our spirituality yearns for completion in relationship with Another greater than ourselves, so too does our sexuality cry out for a companion to ease our aloneness (p. 37). Dalbey (1988) agrees arguing that our sexuality is part of the *Imago Dei* at the very core of our humanness. Sexual desire, he says, must first be understood as the ‘voice of the Creator Spirit-God crying out, “Come back, return from your separateness to the oneness out of which I created you.”’ In essence the triune God is relational and communal, and as beings made in His image our sexuality demonstrates that we too long for community and connection.

A second aspect of the core connection between our sexuality and our spirituality is the desire to reunite the masculine and feminine that were separated at the time of Creation, and have often been at enmity with each other following the Fall and the curse (Gen 2 & 3).

Dalbey (1988) explains this longing particularly well.

We are drawn to each other not to make babies, ... but because from the roots of our creation we share a sacred memory of the species, a ancient inner-recall that at one time we were man-and-woman, Adam-and-Eve, in one body. And so even now the very power of the Creating God is drawing us back to that primal state so we know God completely, as God was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be (p 82).

Thus, to discover our true humanity we must be known by the opposite sex, as it is only together that we can fully begin to reflect the One in whose image we were created. Comiskey (1988) suggests that this becoming ‘one flesh’ (Gen 2: 24) is a powerful symbol of this coming together, as it is in the act of sexual intercourse that male and female merge bodies, souls, minds and spirits. United they complement each other and also create new

life, thus bearing the image of the unified Creator most fully (p 40). MacKnee (1997) goes so far as to say that 'one flesh' sexuality manifests the image of God in a far more profound way than either gender ever could while standing alone (p 214).

A third aspect of the relationship between our sexuality and our spirituality as human beings lies in their common focus on self-disclosure and being 'known' by another. Reiss (1986) describes a major component of sexuality in terms of 'self-disclosure' or making known to another that which was previously hidden (p 33). At creation and before the Fall one of the great privileges of Adam and Eve was to walk with the Lord and with one another, 'naked and unashamed'. This nakedness is a portrait of not only being 'unclothed' physically but also at the far more intimate levels of our soul, spirit and 'core selves'.

This picture of spiritual intimacy between ourselves and our Lord was restored at the Cross when Jesus shed his blood and made a way for us to once again walk with the Father in closeness and communion (Heb 4: 14- 15). Similarly, as Schnarch (1997) indicates, sexual intimacy offers us the greatest opportunity to know ourselves and to know and be known by another (p 211). Our sexuality then is a key vehicle for disclosing core aspects of self as lovers look into each other's eyes and soul while experiencing eroticism together. Significantly, 'knowing' is the term used in the King James version of the Old Testament to indicate sexual intercourse. To know sexually, therefore, is to be known and to know deeply and intimately. It is metaphorical of the way God desires us to know Him and been known by Him. As Harron (1981) eloquently explains both true sexuality and true spirituality require on the part of the person a willingness to 'let go' and abandon one's self entirely and without inhibition to another.

A fourth area of interface between our sexuality and our spirituality that has been suggested is a similarity of energy source or energy flow. MacKnee (1997) in a fascinating consideration of this topic suggests that because of this similarity it is by positively embracing and integrating our sexuality that we can grow spiritually and in our spiritual understanding (p 215). As Johnson (1983) notes:

Romantic love is the single greatest energy system in the Western psyche. In our culture it has supplanted religion as the arena in

which men and women seek meaning, transcendence, wholeness and ecstasy (p xi).

In support of this it is not difficult to note that many of the songs we hear on the radio and television are actually songs of worship, with the messages that 'I will die without you' and 'you make my life worth living' belonging more to a relationship with God, than to a relationship with another human being. Johnson (1983) explains this paralleling of romantic/ sexual love and spiritual aspiration as a form of idolatry in which a human being becomes the object of adoration and thus a symbol of God Himself (p 55).

A number of authors take this point further and argue that this does not mean we should seek to abolish or denigrate romantic or sexual passion, but rather understand the deeper truth or reality that lies hidden in this most common of human experiences. For example, Moore (1985) describes an event when he experienced 'a sudden sense of desire for no specific object at all', an experience he believes to be the hallmark of elevated spirituality (p 80). Similarly, Schnarch (1991) when visiting a temple in India became (along with the others present) aroused 'for nothing or anyone in particular' (p 549). In the context of intense spiritual experiences and elevated spiritual awareness they both experienced desire but without object. Could it be that within the bounds of human sexuality lies the deeper call to know and be drawn passionately to the One who lies beyond the physical and material?

Johnson (1983) certainly takes this line and argues that 'the reality that hides in romantic love is the fact of spiritual aspiration; the truth that the Western man unconsciously and involuntarily seeks in romantic love is the inner truth of his own soul' (p 55). An interesting comment that anecdotally supports this possibility is given by Schnarch (1997) who explains that many of the clients who come to his sex therapy counselling practice leave with the unexpected and surprising adjunct of an awakened spiritual awareness and interest (p 391)!

If, due to this similarity of energy type and flow between sexuality and spirituality, it is difficult to awake one without awakening the other, it also appears to be the case that if one represses either their

sexuality or spirituality they are in danger of thwarting the other as well. For example, Payne (1981) cites a number of examples amongst her clients of how sexual repression or a focus on auto-eroticism as against relational sexual expression can lead to an accompanying blockage of spiritual and creative energy.

A final point of relatedness between human sexuality and human spirituality is suggested by MacKnee (1997, p 213). If spirituality is to be considered as an integration of all aspects of the human person and the accompanying actualisation of the person's fullest potential, with the reality that transcends our physical senses, then the role of sexuality in one's spiritual development becomes obvious. In other words if God wants to relate to the whole person, know and be known by the whole person, then our sexuality must clearly be part of what we bring to authentic relationship with Him.

### **A Positive Integrationist Perspective on Sexuality**

It would seem that while many Christians can accept theoretically that sexuality is a positive and important part of our nature, far fewer take the next step - that we can actually bring our sexuality into God's presence. Often the Christian experience seems to be that we should leave our sexuality at the door of the church, forget about it during worship or leave it out of our prayers.

In their chapter on sexuality and prayer Ulanov and Ulanov (1988) give a suggestion as to why this may be:

Most things we leave out of our praying are things that frighten us, embarrass us, or make us ashamed. Sexuality needs to be faced and included in just those particular terms, with just those special variations that insist upon our individuality. God loves all of us, and therefore our sexual lives too. So we must bring to prayer the excitements, the wonders, the confusions and the bruises that make up our lives in this area, just as we would bring the issues and problems of the spirit and the soul.

It is important here to remember that our sexuality is not only part of being human - it is part of being created 'very good', a core aspect of the *imago dei* within each of us. Thus Henri Nouwen often spoke

of 'bringing my body (and sexuality) home', or in other words not repressing it but rather making friends with it.

Sadly, for many people in this fallen world sexuality is not a positive and celebrated part of the human experience, but a source of brokenness and shame. Nouwen (1992) reminds us that our sexuality and our brokenness often lie very close together, because our deepest needs often become sexualised- in other words we begin to look for a sexual answer to what are deeply spiritual longings and become wounded and disillusioned in the process (p 70). The Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well (Jn 4) is a good example of this common human pattern. She had six husbands and de factos but was told by Jesus that it was only water from the spiritual well that he alone could give to her which could quench her deepest thirst. And as MacKnee (1997) reminds us just as sexuality can lead to communion and intimacy, so too in our fallenness can we use our sexuality selfishly in the exploitation of others (p 217).

As Carnes (1987) and others have pointed out if, in our shame and brokenness or even in the desire to be more 'holy', we deny the 'shadow' element in our lives of our unwanted sexuality, we run the risk of becoming unable to control our sexual urges and even falling under the bondage of compulsive, sinful sexual practices. Similarly, Nouwen (1988) states, 'if I keep my sexual life a hidden life (just for myself), it will gradually be split off from the rest of my life and become a dangerous force' (p 169).

How then is it possible to reconcile this apparent paradox? How can we 'bring our bodies and sexuality home', while still recognising how broken and shameful we often feel about this core part of humanness?

According to Nouwen (1992) the great joy of the Gospel is that it is indeed when we are most broken and shamed that the Father most wants us to bring this wounding and sin to Him:

The leaders and prophets of Israel, who were clearly chosen and blessed, all lived very broken lives. And we, the Beloved Sons and Daughters of God, cannot escape our brokenness either... Our

brokenness is always lived and experienced as highly personal, intimate and unique. Yes, fearsome as it may sound, as the Beloved ones, we are called to claim our unique brokenness, just as we have to claim our unique chosenness and unique blessedness..

It is obvious that our brokenness is often most painfully experienced with respect to our sexuality. My own and my friends' struggles make it clear how central our sexuality is to the way we think and feel about ourselves. Our sexuality reveals to us our enormous yearning for communion. The desires of our body - to be touched, embraced and safely held - belong to the deepest longings of the heart, and are very concrete signs of our search for oneness. (p 70)

Brokenness and sexuality - both have to do with the most intimate aspects of myself - my vulnerability, my nakedness - and yet it is possible to be naked and not ashamed. Our calling in God is to find out that we can be broken, we can be naked, we can be our true selves, yet without shame. This is the environment where it is possible to integrate and embrace our sexuality with all its bruises, uncertainties, wounds and difficulties.

### **Some Applications for Ministry of a Positive Biblical View of Sexuality**

Well known Christian speaker and identity in the area of sexuality, Sy Rogers (2002), has said that in his experience most teaching and discussion of sex in the evangelical church (when it is present at all) tends to be 'sex-negative'. In other words it focuses on encouraging Christians not to sin sexually and to keep themselves sexually pure. This would certainly seem consistent with the experience of this author and many other long-term church members in Australia. Schnarch (1997) has suggested that one possible reason for this is the Christian tradition of viewing sex as inherently sinful and somehow not compatible or even oppositional to true spirituality (p 392).

What are the implications then of the 'sex-positive' view argued by this paper? What are the practical out-workings of 'bringing our bodies and sexuality home', both personally and within the Body of Christ?

The suggestions below are not meant to be a comprehensive list but do suggest a number of possible implications for both individual believers and for those in pastoral ministry.

1) We need to begin to teach openly on the subject of sexuality and balance messages about what we are not allowed to do sexually as Christians, with more positive and affirming messages about the biblical basis of sexuality, its compatibility with our spirituality and God's desire for us to bring our sexuality and all its accompanying aspects into His presence.

2) We need to provide more permission and opportunities for Christians to talk openly about their sexuality in the context of their lives and faith. As Nouwen (1988) suggests that confession of one's private life (including sexual life) and personal accountability within the context of loving spiritual community leads one to greater wholeness and health (p 217). It is certainly the experience of this author that in support groups for Christians experiencing compulsive sexual behaviours and other sexual difficulties that an environment to speak honestly but without shame is of incredible benefit.

3) Rather than avoid and ignore difficult issues associated with human sexuality the Church needs to begin to engage in meaningful dialogue concerning biblical theology and ethics. In a very challenging paper Rosenau (1997) encourages the wider Body to create an applied theology of such issues of masturbation, single sexuality, dating, homosexuality, oral sex, orgasm and erotic pleasure (p 5).

4) Pastoral counsellors could perhaps begin to help church members to be authentic about their sexual struggles and to seek to discover the deeper meaning in their suffering. MacKnee (1997) for example cites examples of Christians whom he has counselled who have felt guilty about being caught in the 'trap of masturbation' and yet have made greater progress when they have focused on thanking God for their sexuality than they have when they have cried out to God to take away their desires (p 218).

5) Certainly it is appropriate to encourage married couples in the church to feel free to explore the good gift of their sexuality as a bridge to both greater relational and spiritual intimacy with God and with each other. Rosenau (1997) recommends that couples be given guidance on how to enhance their love-making through the teaching of simple intimacy and communication skills (p 5). And as Fuchs (1983) explains, 'a man and woman can (learn to) celebrate through the fragile language of their bodies, the mystery of the world and of God' (p 231).

6) Finally, an appreciation of sexual and romantic desire as a God-given metaphor pointing to the deeper and truer human need to find our fulfilment in our Creator, potentially opens up new and dynamic understandings of how God wants to relate to us as His people. As middle age woman mystic, Julian of Norwich, once wrote, 'God wants to be thought of as our Lover. I must see myself so bound in love as if everything that has been done has been done for me.' It is probable that such a realisation of God's love could profoundly deepen the spiritual lives and passion of many modern day believers as well.

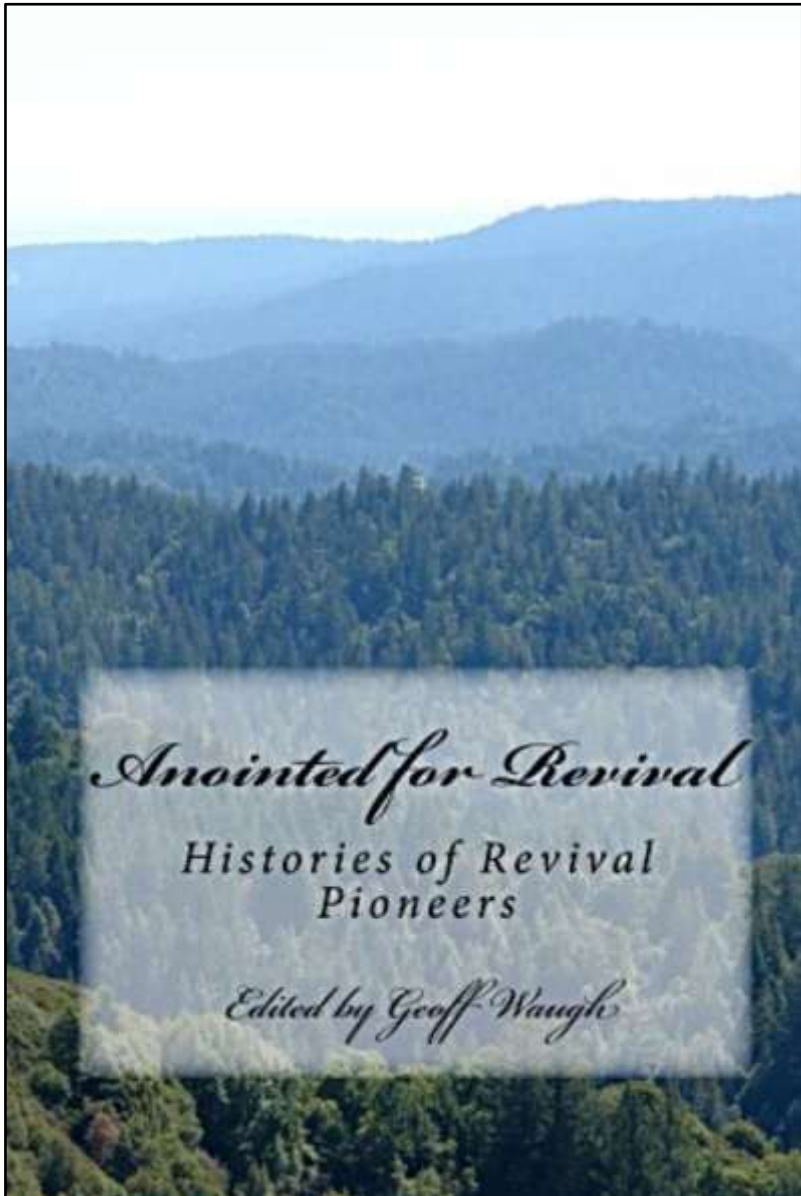
In summary it is important to recognise that human sexuality is a wonderful gift from our Creator and is seen by Him to be 'very good'. Likewise our spirituality is part of the *imago dei* that separates human beings from the rest of the created order. It follows that the more that we are able to explore, integrate and embrace these two crucial aspects of the human experience the more we will be able to reclaim the God image with which we were created.

Accepting the relation between sexuality and spirituality offers a vehicle for a 'post-conventional' understanding of individual potential and relational growth. For too long the Christian church has depreciated sexuality as something anti-spiritual. Since humans were created with both sexual and spiritual dimensions, it is likely that integrating the two facets will reveal more of the mystery of being 'fully human' or whole (MacKnee, 1997, p 219).



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*Anointed for Revival*  
**Histories of Revival Pioneers**

## ***5 The Mystics and Contemporary Psychology***

### **Irene Alexander**



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Many Christians, across denominations and backgrounds, have been rediscovering the heritage of their Christian faith, particularly the mystics of earlier centuries. The mystics are men and women who have somehow found God in a way that allows them to experience God's reality in the depths of their being and have often passed on profound truths that can enable us to come closer in our walk with God.

Many of the truths these men and women have experienced have also begun to appear in other forms in contemporary society. Tacey (2000) suggests that in earlier times the traditional church structures were valid 'containers for spirituality', but that for many the institutionalised church structures no longer seem relevant and they are seeking other ways to find and express their spirituality.

Counselling and therapy have become, as it were, another container for spirituality – a way for people to find meaning in their lives, to connect with their pain and see how it leads them to deeper truth, and deeper connection with God and others.

Exploring containers for spirituality relevant for this century it is helpful to be aware of past themes of relating to the Divine. In seeking to journey with others – both Christians and not – it is useful for us to have some understanding of timeless truths that have been lived by those of past centuries as well as ideas that contemporary researchers are discovering – or, in fact rediscovering. This article introduces a few of the themes of the mystics and shows their parallel in contemporary thought.

### **The Journey**

Indeed ‘the journey’ is one of those themes. All beginning students of psychology and counselling dip into ‘human development’ or ‘development across the lifespan’ and learn about the theories of Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson and Fowler which give us ways of interpreting the life stages in relationship to cognitive, moral, psychosocial and spiritual development. The recognition that life is ‘a journey’ through different stages, different ways of perceiving reality, different ways of relating to God and others, is an important part of twentieth century psychology. Although the concept of ‘age and stage’ has been strongly critiqued there is a general recognition that there are recognisable patterns across the lifespan, awareness of which can facilitate individual understanding and development.

Fowler’s (1981) stages of spiritual development, for example, have helped many people recognise that the changes in their faith are less to do with ‘backsliding’ than with healthy growth and maturing. Thus the often black-and-white faith of teenage years is replaced with a more individual, analytical faith in the twenties and thirties, and then a more inclusive re-visiting of ideas and experience in mid-life. It is recognised then, that each individual is likely to change in the way he or she views God, relates to a community of faith, and expresses spirituality.

This concept of an ongoing journey and individual differences and experiences along the way is one that numbers of the mystics have explored.

Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth century Spanish Carmelite, used the metaphor of the rooms of a castle to illustrate the spiritual journey. The first three stages of the journey involve a move from sporadic interest in relationship with God and time spent with God to a more steady relationship, but a tendency to focus on outward practice rather than inner self. The fourth stage is the turning point to a true inner journey and resting in God, with acceptance of grace and Spirit over law. The final three stages are characterised by union with God in an increasingly steady and mutual relationship. There still remain the dark periods and pain of surrender but also an intense desire and ecstasy of union with God. The Appendix gives more detail from *The Interior Castle* (Welch 1982).

Coe (2000) uses a contemporary of Teresa, John of the Cross, in his writing (see below) to trace similar developmental stages from biblical, psychological and spiritual perspectives. He notes the differences between pre-conversion, beginner and later stages using the ideas of our love of God 'for Pleasure's sake', 'for Love's sake', 'for God's sake'. He shows the importance of the 'dark nights' in the transformation and maturing process.

Interestingly, as Thompson (1984) points out, modern psychology has been helpful in reconnecting with the mystics. "When Teresa of Avila described the soul as an interior castle which most people never explore, she was stating truth we needed Freud and Jung to demonstrate. In our fragmented society, in which we are alienated from our inner resources, we remain largely dismissive of the most ancient and neglected spring of wisdom in Western Culture, its mystical tradition" (p. 42).

Freud and Jung then, twentieth century psychoanalysts, recognised, as Teresa of Avila did four hundred years earlier, that many of us defend against the inner work of bringing into our consciousness our desires, pain, blockages, fears. For Teresa this work was essential to bring us into deeper relationship with God and each other. A knowledge of the patterns of the journey – whether seen from Teresa's movement through the Interior Castle, or through Fowler's stages or Maslow's hierarchy of needs to the self-giving of

true self-actualisation – can help the traveller find the way to further growth and wholeness.

### **Spiritual formation**

Another aspect of the journey which has become a popular focus recently is the recognition that we need to be intentional about the process of the journey – an emphasis on ‘spiritual formation’, the ‘inner life’. Modernist education left our generation with a legacy of intellectual and doctrinal propositions as a measure of our spirituality. That is our faith and orthodoxy were assessed by whether we believed the right doctrines, whether we could answer catechismal questions correctly. In contrast pentecostal and charismatic churches emphasised the experience of God through the spirit. Believers’ spiritual development may be seen by how they respond actively in worship, or believe in miracles, or exercise spiritual gifts, and the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

This shift from an emphasis on the cognitive, intellectual, rational to the more experiential and emotional has been a general shift in society’s way of understanding reality. Indeed contemporary psychology and counselling are also shifting from a more cognitive emphasis to a focus on the whole person, acknowledging the importance of the emotions, experience and relationship. However, we are still learning how to balance the cognitive and the emotional, how to use experiences and relationships to develop the ‘inner life’ toward psychological and spiritual maturity.

Says Willard (2000), “We have counted on preaching, teaching, and knowledge or information to form faith in the hearer, and have counted on faith to form the inner life and outward behaviour of the Christian. ... The result is that we have multitudes of professing Christians who well may be ready to die, but obviously are not ready to live, and can hardly get along with themselves, much less others.”

There is a close comparison then, between contemporary psychology’s emphasis on inner work, and the growing awareness that we need to be intentional about our spiritual growth.

Intentional spiritual formation is thus an understanding of the process of how spiritual growth occurs, indeed how Christ is formed in us (Galatians 4:19). May (1982) explains spiritual formation as “all attempts, means, instructions, and disciplines intended towards deepening of faith and furtherance of spiritual growth. It includes spiritual endeavours as well as the more intimate and in-depth process of spiritual direction” (p. 6).

## **Spiritual disciplines**

Another parallel then between contemporary ideas – both psychological and theological – and the teachings of the mystics is the recognition that the faith journey – or the journey to maturity – is a long slow process, not just a quick-fix, or an impartation of knowledge. Spiritual formation is a process which involves a shaping of the inner life, and therefore a living of the outer life which reflects relationship with God, shown in responsiveness to God and to others. The spiritual disciplines have long been acknowledged as a part of spiritual formation, an important part of the growth process.

The spiritual disciplines have been recognised in more and more recent books for example *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit* by psychologist and pastor Siang-Yang Tan, and *The Active Life* by educator Parker-Palmer. The spiritual disciplines include, solitude and silence, as well as prayer and meditation. The Protestant work ethic has often distanced us from these, or turned what is supposed to be a refreshing encounter with the Divine, into another kind of work and striving. The mystics call us to rest in God, to pray by sitting silent in his presence (as in *The Cloud of Unknowing* by an unknown fourteenth century English mystic), to allow his word to refresh our souls.

Contemporary psychology also emphasises these processes. Many popular non-Christian books have similar emphases *Care of the Soul* by Thomas Moore (1992), is one of the earlier books, but a browse in any bookshop now turns up numbers of books encouraging harried Westerners to slow down, meditate, get in touch with the Divine. This is not meant to imply that these books are the same as Christian faith and practice, but simply draws the parallel in

recognising the development of the whole person – mind, soul and spirit, and the need for processes which enable people to care for their soul, to develop their relationship with the transcendent, to mature in their emotional and relational responses.

### **The true self**

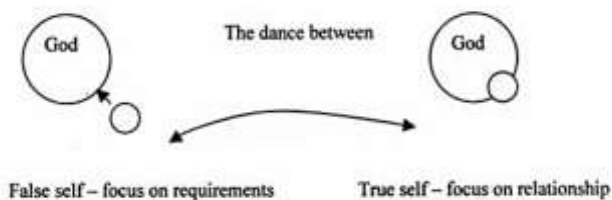
Another part of the journey recognised in some schools of psychology, especially the Jungian, is the leaving of the false self and the discovery of the true self. Pennington (2000) describes the development of the false self through the usual childhood developmental processes of gaining love and approval for achievement and performance. “[Children’s] value depends on what they have, what they do, what others – especially significant providers, real or potential – think of them. ... This is the construct of the false self” (p. 31). The false self is formed by fulfilling all the internalised rules and requirements to gain acceptance and approval by those we value – including God. We often are not even aware that we have transposed these beliefs on to God and yet we spend our lives living according to certain internalised patterns of behaviour that we think will gain God’s approval.

In contrast, the true self is found in abandonment to God. It is most easily identified by remembering an experience in which we had a revelation of God’s utter acceptance of us – a time when we knew as deeply as we have known anything that we are loved simply for who we are – there is nothing we can do – it is, after all, all grace. In that moment of deep knowing we are most in touch with the true self.

Pennington helps us identify this by comparing it to how we feel when we know ourselves loved, in love. “One of the great experiences of life is that first experience of being in love and being loved. Of course our parents love us. They have to, or so it seems, and siblings, too. But the first time someone loves us for no other reason than that person has in some way perceived our true beauty, our true loveliness, we float. We are ecstatic. For we have seen in the eyes of the lover something of our own true beauty. The only way we really see ourselves is when we see ourselves reflected back to us from the eyes of one who truly loves us” (2000, p. 46).



The true self is who we most truly are, having shed all the striving for acceptance, approval and control. Again Pennington elucidates: "When we perceive more and more clearly our true self in God, we are all but dazzled by the wonder of this image of God. But at the same time we are profoundly humbled. For we know that we are made in the image and likeness of God. ... And we know that, but for the grace of God, it could be wholly lost" (2000, p. 49).



Ruffing (2000), in a careful examination of relationship with God and the developmental process points out how our self-image and God-image correspond – that is, as we are able to accept the reality of God as a God who loves unconditionally we are more and more able to see our selves as lovable. It is a revelation of the astoundingly accepting love of God which first reflects to us the image of the true self, and it is the grace of God which keeps us in the place of ceasing striving and letting our hearts, as Rilke (1996), says "simply open".

In his poem Rilke, a German poet, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, shows how often our portrayals of God keep us in the false self and thus hide our selves from our selves and from God. He suggests that an overemphasis on God as King may keep us in the position of being subservient and therefore not truly our selves.

We must not portray you in king's robes  
You drifting mist that brought forth the morning.

Once again from the old paintboxes  
we take the same gold for sceptre and crown  
that has disguised you through the ages.

Piously we produce images of you  
till they stand around you like a thousand walls.  
And when our hearts would simply open  
Our fervent hands hide you.

Psychological and spiritual growth then, have both been recognised to be a letting go of false images of self (and of God), and discovering the true self, as well as finding the God who is. This letting go of the false self fits with Jesus saying we must die to self (Matt 16: 24-25) – we have to let go of all the ego strivings which we cling to in order to look good in the eyes of the world. Instead we are to find the true self, as Jesus went on to say - what does it profit anyone if they should gain the world but lose the true self – the ‘soul’ (Matt 16: 26). The reality is that we tend to dance back and forth between the true self and the false self, hopefully learning more and more to lose the false self and find the true (Rohr 1999).

Muto (1991) notes that it is impossible to lose a self we do not have. She believes that until we know something of who we are, strengths and weaknesses, we cannot die to the false. “People can become quite sick if they try to annihilate what does not exist” (p. 17). This is a stark reminder that the process of life is a journey – which cannot be hurried by jumping ahead of where we really are. Muto suggests that some success and a ‘good dose of self-esteem’ are needed for the next, often dark, stages of the journey described by John of the Cross, a sixteenth century mystic, who introduces us to an essential part of the journey generally avoided by the West – the journey of darkness and of suffering.

### **Dark night of the soul**

In many ways the modern world, especially medicine, has taught us to believe that freedom from suffering is possible. Modern psychology can easily be seen to be allied with the medical model, and therefore the flight from suffering, for example with the quick prescription of antidepressants. However psychological research shows that the longer process of therapy – especially changing of negative thought – is an important part of dealing with depression and anxiety. Other psychological models emphasise the need for ‘emotional work’, the painful process of staying with anger,

rejection, fear, grief and anxiety, in order to trace their development and to change destructive relational patterns which continue to produce these unresolved feelings. There is then a growing awareness that engaging with pain and suffering is a way to wholeness, to a more authentic personhood.

The mystics were certainly more attuned to this truth than the West has been for many decades. John of the Cross in particular has introduced us to the 'dark night of the soul'. This expression has been used in various ways but basically refers to the episodes of not experiencing God, of finding ourselves bereft of our usual sense of God's presence and therefore having to seek God in a different way, to trust God's presence and reality and love in spite of a lack of experiencing these in ways we are used to. It can be compared with 'wilderness' times, where everything we used to draw sustenance from seems to have deserted us and we find no comfort – and yet in the long run it leads us to deeper relationship with God.

John of the Cross draws much from the content and language of Song of Solomon, and the dark night of the soul can be found in the times where the maiden goes looking for her beloved and cannot find him (Song of Sol 3:2, 5:6) and yet in this story too, she comes up from the wilderness 'leaning on her Beloved' (Song of Sol 8:5). John notes that during the dark night there is a time of dryness when both the things of God and the things of the world lose their appeal. Further, "All support systems are found wanting, and only a naked faith sustains the pilgrim" (Welch 1982 p. 145).

John of the Cross's poem, 'The Dark Night', (translated by Kavanaugh 1979), indeed shows us the dark night, but reveals even more vividly the wonder of the Love we can find in this experience:

One dark night  
Fired with love's urgent longings  
- Ah, the sheer grace! -  
I went out unseen  
My house being now all stilled;

In darkness, and secure,  
By the secret ladder, disguised,  
- Ah, the sheer grace! -

In darkness and concealment,  
My house being now all stilled;

On that glad night,  
In secret, for no one saw me,  
Nor did I look at anything,  
With no other light or guide  
Than the one that burned in my heart;

This guided me  
More surely than the light of noon  
To where he waited for me  
- Him I knew so well -  
In a place where no one else appeared.

Oh guiding night!  
O night more lovely than the dawn!  
O night that has united  
The Lover with His beloved,  
Transforming the beloved in her Lover.

Upon my flowering breast  
Which I kept wholly for Him alone,  
There He lay sleeping,  
And I caressing Him  
There in the breeze from the fanning cedars.

When the breeze blew from the turret  
Parting his hair,  
He wounded my neck  
With His gentle hand,  
Suspending all my senses.

I abandoned and forgot myself,  
Laying my face on my Beloved;  
All things ceased; I went out from myself,  
Leaving my cares  
Forgotten among the lilies.

John of the Cross leaves us in no doubt that the experience of

separation from God, the periods of suffering and unrequited longing, are, in the end nothing compared with the union with God which results.

The lesson which the mystics teach us over and over is that knowing God, and finding a love relationship with God is the highest meaning of life. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might. ...let him ... glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord" (Jeremiah 9: 23-24).

### **Knowing: intuitive and relational**

So we find that these wise men and women recognised that knowing God was not about intellect and knowledge but rather another kind of knowing all together. As the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* explains: "It is God, and he alone, who can fully satisfy the hunger and longing of our spirit which transformed by his redeeming grace is enabled to embrace him by love. He whom neither men nor angels can grasp by knowledge can be embraced by love. For the intellect of both men and angels is too small to comprehend God as he is in himself" (Johnston 1973, p. 50).

And further Julian of Norwich, after fifteen years of pondering the meaning of the revelations given to her by God said "You would know our Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was his meaning. Who showed it you? Love. What did he show you? Love. Why did he show it? For love. Hold on to this and you will know and understand love more and more. But you will not know or learn anything else – ever!' So it was that I learned that love was our Lord's meaning. ... In this love all his works have been done, and in this love he has made everything serve us; and in this love our life is everlasting. Our beginning was when we were made, but the love in which he made us never had beginning" (Wolters 1966, p. 212).

Jones (1985) explains the two contrasting traditions of knowing with the use of images, pictures, symbols and the way of emptying, the *via negativa*, "sometimes called apophatic (which means against

or away from the light) or contemplative. .... This way of not-knowing lies at the heart of the way of believing that helps me live as a believer” (p. 25). And de Mello (1990) explains how deeply this is part of the Christian faith quoting Aquinas of the thirteenth century: “This is St Thomas Aquinas’ introduction to his whole *Summa Theologica*: “Since we cannot know what God is, but only what God is not, we cannot consider how God is but only how He is not.”...This man was considered the prince of theologians. He was a mystic, and is a canonized saint today” (p. 127).

While contemporary psychology continues to emphasise scientific method rather than ‘not-knowing’ there has certainly been a shift from an emphasis on objective, rational knowing to include relational and intuitive knowing can allow the West to embrace relationship with the Divine as part of their intellectual as well as spiritual lives. This shift from the cool, objective ways of knowing to the warmer, relational, subjective ways of knowing allows something of the delight in God to be experienced. This is seen in the writings of a Persian mystic, Hafiz, of the fourteenth century:

What is the difference  
Between your experience of Existence  
And that of a saint?

The saint knows  
That the spiritual path  
Is a sublime chess game with God.

And the Beloved  
Has just made such a Fantastic Move  
That the saint is continually  
Tripping over Joy  
And bursting out in Laughter  
And saying “I surrender!”

Whereas, my dear,  
I am afraid you still think  
You have a thousand serious moves.

Contemporary western society then, is rediscovering important

themes of the earlier Christian traditions. The writings of the mystics – of the journey, the intention of development of the true self, the process of inner work through pain, darkness, disciplines of silence and ‘soul-care’, and the acknowledgement of ways of knowing that are intuitive and relational – can inform our present journey and ways of spiritual and psychological development.

### **Appendix: The Interior Castle of Teresa of Avila (Welch 1992)**

Stages of the journey:

1. Self knowledge: Conscious effort at prayer and reflection, but often so involved in worldly things that it is still caught by these impediments. Glimpses of true self-knowledge (both beauty and sin) in the light of God’s love and mercy.

2. External practices. There is a steadier commitment to prayer, but the call of God is more externally mediated – through books, sermons, other people and events. Teresa notes “you cannot begin to recollect yourself by force but only by gentleness”.

3. Both inner and outer journey – i.e. a commitment to prayer, and also to acts of service and Christian behaviour. A tendency towards a ‘religious ego’, a sureness of knowing the whole story which leads to a certain self-righteousness. A certain restlessness, and desire for more leads the traveller on. Teresa uses images of serpents as being those things which distract the pilgrim from God.

4. This stage is a major transition in life, the beginning of the inner journey. Grace and Spirit become dominant rather than self-striving. Initially prayer is still the active prayer of meditation but rapidly becomes an absorption in God, the ‘prayer of quiet’. “Like a good shepherd with a whistle so gentle ... this shepherd’s whistle has such power that they abandon the exterior things in which they were estranged from Him and enter the castle” (p. 104). The image of this stage is fountains built over the source.

5. The prayer of union – a deepening of contemplative prayer. However experiences of union tend to be brief. The symbol Teresa uses is that of a white butterfly which is being transformed in the

cocoon and emerges in the next stage.

6. An intensification of the union which involves both intense pain and times of ecstasy, both a dark night of the spirit and an experience of betrothal, a wounding and a drawing out of the arrow.

7. The union with God is completed. This is the very centre of the castle where the King dwells and it is characterised as marriage. There is a deep interior peace – as well as an emphasis on service in the world.

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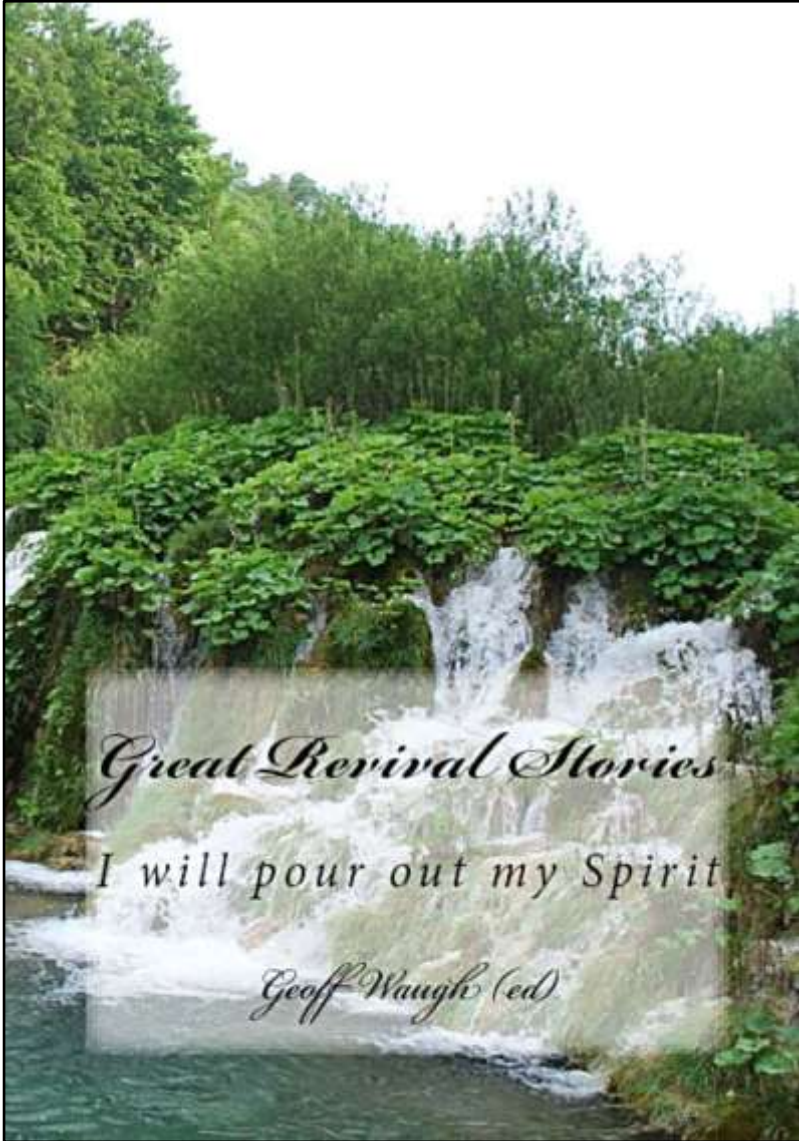
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## ***6 Problems Associated with the Institutionalisation of Ministry***

**Warren Holyoak**



Warren Holyoak (right, with elders) wrote as a Churches of Christ minister in Queensland working with a team of leaders in The Point Church at Wellington Point, Brisbane. This article was presented as a paper at the Contemporary Issues in Ministry Conference,

2002, at Christian Heritage College, Brisbane, Australia.

### **Introduction**

Institutions are the product of the human drive to organise cooperative activity. I want to emphasise their human nature. This is not to say that God does not approve of institutions. Prior to Jesus' coming God instituted the temple worship and sacrificial system of Israel. Jesus came to build his church. God has sought to order and regulate joint activities of his people. But even joint activities initiated by God have historically taken on, and to some extent been transformed by, the distinctly human qualities of institutionalisation. Traditions, hierarchies, even buildings and a sense of place in society are human marks of an institution. So are ambition, power, control, pride and tendencies toward self-

promotion and survival. It is these human qualities of institutions that have historically subverted God's purposes and, in my view, generally make them incompatible with pure Christianity.

The detailed regulation of institutions that God promoted under the Old Covenant were not provided to help them operate effectively, but to serve a prophetic or typological function as they pointed forward to the coming of Christ. The church that Jesus came to build was far less defined in human institutional terms. Whereas, for example, the religious institutions of the Jews and Samaritans argued over the correct place of worship, Jesus told the Samaritan woman who raised the issue that, "a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:20-24). This expressed a shift in emphasis from externals to the hearts of worshippers. Consequently, we learn far more about the early church from their behaviour than by instruction. Even when Paul sought more orderly meetings of the church in Corinth, his directions were more than anything else practical, and his intent was that their meetings be spiritually beneficial (refer to 1 Corinthians 10:23-34; 14:6-40). Anthony<sup>72</sup> and others have interpreted the lack of direction to mean that we are free to devise whatever church organisational structure we feel will best facilitate its ministry and outreach. My view, however, is that not only does God seem to be far more interested in the organic functioning of the church than its institutional trappings, but that any institutional trappings we bring to the church are more likely to hinder than help.

The organisational feature of the church given most attention in the New Testament is that of individual roles. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul likens the contribution made by each member to the complementary functioning of body parts in a growing, healthy human being (Eph. 4:15-16). In context, the two necessary things that are identified are unity and leadership (Eph. 4:1-14). These are recurring themes throughout the New Testament. For each individual to function as they should in the church they need mature leadership and a spirit of unity. The text in Ephesians

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<sup>72</sup> M.J. Anthony, *The Effective Church Board*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1993), pp.101-102.

shows how leadership contributes to unity by promoting growth in every member toward a Christ-like maturity. It is therefore no surprise that leadership is the organisational feature given the next most attention in the New Testament.

John C. Maxwell<sup>73</sup> has been the most published of many recent authors who have focussed on church leadership. They have offered many useful insights, but in my view too often their ideal church leader looks very similar to the ideal corporate or institutional leader. The most apparent difference is reference to servant leadership in the church, but its practical impact seems to be more on the attitude of the leader than on the nature of the role. If the church functions much like any other institution, this would be appropriate. My point is, however, that the role of church leaders is very different to that of institutional leaders because the church is unlike any human institution.

Christ is the leader of the church. The organisational function of the church is to help each member be like its leader. According to Paul, that involves preparation for works of service, unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and maturation (Eph. 4:12-13). Human leaders, therefore, are essentially facilitators of the growth process. They are also participants in this process – but just further down the road. This is most evident in the qualities Paul nominates as “musts” for church overseers and deacons to Timothy and Titus (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9). I have more to say about this, but will do so as I consider what I believe are some of the problems associated with the institutionalisation of church ministry.

There are three problems I believe institutionalisation has brought to the church:

1. Hierarchical structures;
2. Inappropriate distinctions; and
3. Inappropriate roles.

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<sup>73</sup> His books include “Developing the Leader Within You” and “Developing the Leaders Around You” published by Thomas Nelson (Nashville, Tennessee) in 1993 and 1995.

## **Hierarchical Structures**

Notwithstanding all the recent efforts to “flatten” the organisational structures of secular institutions, they remain essentially hierarchical<sup>74</sup>. Titles are carefully crafted to reflect rank as well as role, and salary differentials are greater than they have ever been. There seems no other way to manage human institutions, particularly large ones. If we want things done properly in the church, then we are naturally inclined to apply the best cultural model we know. We might even be encouraged by its apparent success in better organising churches that are generally notorious for inertia, inefficient decision-making and a lack of what our culture calls “professionalism”.

But the New Testament emphasis is that churches be orderly rather than professional; effective rather than efficient; and led by the Spirit rather than by human agendas. Spiritual maturation is an uneven individual process that defies planning or timetables. Certainly, management is necessary, but the New Testament designation of management roles is more descriptive than titular. Initially, leadership was in the hands of the “apostles”, a general word used to describe “one set forth”<sup>75</sup> (as used of Jesus (Heb. 3:10; Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14); Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7); Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Silas and Timothy (1 Thess. 2:6), but which also seems to have been used to specifically refer to the twelve (Acts 1:24-26) and Paul (1 Cor. 9:1-2; Gal. 1:1) because they had seen the Lord and been specially commissioned by Him). New churches were established by “evangelists” (bringers of good news), who were typically itinerant preachers of the gospel. Once churches became established, local leadership seems to have passed to “bishops” (or “overseers”) and “deacons” (or “ministers” or “servants”)<sup>76</sup>. Once again these designations were descriptive rather than titular.

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<sup>74</sup> In fact, most of the ‘flattening’ has practically had more to do with cutting costs by reducing middle management than any fundamental reform of hierarchical management structures.

<sup>75</sup> W.E. Vine, *An expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H Revel Company, 1940), Vol.II, p.44.

<sup>76</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak*. (Austin, Texas: Sweet Publishing Company, 1971), p. 171.

It did not take long, however, for Christians to start thinking about these role descriptors in a titular sense. Steinbron<sup>77</sup> blames Constantine's Romanisation of the church in the fourth century, but as early as the second century, Ignatius<sup>78</sup> describes a distinction between "bishop" and "elder" in the church in Antioch and elsewhere. "Elder" (or "presbyter") was initially just another descriptive noun emphasising the maturity of overseers – the terms are used interchangeably in passages such as Titus 1:5-9. But each church had a plurality of elders<sup>79</sup> and it is evident that cultural influences soon promoted a more titular usage to distinguish between the presiding "bishop" and the other "elders". When bishops from a number of churches subsequently met, the title of "archbishop" for the presiding bishop was the logical next step.

The same role is also referred to in the New Testament as that of "pastor" or 'shepherd"<sup>80</sup>. This describes the style of this leadership role. Its usage in a more titular way came much later, probably because the secular role of a shepherd was well known and had little status. More recently the preferred form "pastor" has come into vogue, but is typically used in a distinctive way that distinguishes the role from that of "elder" or "overseer". In many evangelical churches, "pastor" is a title reserved for professional leaders whereas "elder" refers to the lay leadership. For example, in many Baptist churches, the eldership consists of mature local members who exercise oversight, but who also appoint a trained "pastor" to shepherd the flock. This parallels the institutional model of a board of directors who appoint managers to run the operation.

So from the one role that was variously described in the New Testament, we now have each descriptor used in a titular way to define and distinguish a variety of roles. This has accompanied (both aided and abetted) the institutionalisation of the church and

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<sup>77</sup> M.J. Steinbron, *The Lay Driven Church*. (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1997), p.49.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak*. (Austin, Texas: Sweet Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 168-9.

<sup>79</sup> Kevin J. Conner, *The Church in the New Testament*. (Blackburn South, Victoria: K.J.C. Publications, 1989), p.200.

<sup>80</sup> Note the interchangeability of descriptive terms in 1 Peter 5:1-4.

its ministry.

A similar thing has happened to the role of servant. All Christians should serve one another and this is the descriptive meaning of the word “deacon”<sup>81</sup>, or “minister”. The qualifications set out by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 also use this descriptor for a position of authority. The role seems to have been one of coordination to ensure that the physical needs of the church were met. Much like the seven appointed to administer the daily distribution of food to needy widows (Acts 6) and free the apostles to concentrate on the spiritual needs of the church, the function of “deacons” complements the spiritual leadership of shepherds. But once again institutionalisation has adapted and made distinctions between the various renderings of the same word. “Servant” has not suited the status we attach to a title, but “deacon” and “minister” are widely used. Most typically, “deacon” is used of lay workers whereas “minister” is used of professional workers.

The larger the institution, the more hierarchical distinctions we want to make of roles within it, and so the more titles we will need. Inevitably, it has been necessary to go beyond Biblical descriptors. “Reverend”, “Canon”, “Primate”, “Pope”, and other variants have evolved. Each has developed a cultural status because culture recognises and respects the status of institutional hierarchies. But what has this done to the church?

### **Inappropriate Distinctions**

Hierarchical distinctions are not compatible with the mutual interdependency intended for church function as illustrated by the body model of Ephesians 4. Titles themselves discriminate in inappropriate ways. Not only can they be used to praise or flatter (cf. John 12:43; Job 32:21-22), but they call too much attention to our status at the expense of God’s, as Jesus warned: “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father’, for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called ‘teacher’, for you have one Teacher, the Christ.” (Matthew 23:8-10)

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81 Vine, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, pp.272-3.



Ministry in the New Testament churches was an expectation of each and every Christian (Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 12:12-31). While "the worker deserves his wages" (1 Tim. 5:18), the same context generally encourages Christians to avoid burdening the church by working for a living and providing for their family (1 Tim. 5:3-16). Giving was primarily directed at needy Christians. Financial support for ministry seems to have been largely occasional and circumstantial. This was certainly the case for Paul who sometimes received financial support from churches and sometimes worked as a tentmaker to support himself. The "workers" in view in 1 Timothy 5 were elders, "especially those who work is preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17), who are said to be "worthy of double honour".

Institutionalisation of churches has led to more formal employment structures. The clergy - laity distinction is one broad outcome. Even where this distinction is actively minimised, more subtle issues can be identified, some with profound implications for the life and functioning of the church.

The most obvious of these is for the burden of church work to be placed upon the paid worker(s). They, after all, have the time and the institutional mindset wants to make them responsible and measure their performance by results. This is a far cry from Paul's model outlined in Ephesians 4, as Colson points out, "Contrary to popular impressions today, the pastor is not paid to do our work (service) for us ... [They] are to equip the saints - that's us - to serve"<sup>82</sup>. "This is why the church's primary focus must always be on developing the character of its people."<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, churches become organisationally, if not clerically, dependent, even though such a structure is incapable or really meeting there needs. In other words, without the institutional structure in place, including roles filled by paid workers, the church cannot function. Towns believes that this is the unavoidable end of what has been described as the sociological cycle of church growth.

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<sup>82</sup> Charles Colson, *The Body*. (Dallas, Texas: Word Publications, 1992), p.389.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p.408.

"Most denominations become cold, from making the organization the goal of existence, rather than fulfilling a biblical purpose."<sup>84</sup> The role of members becomes akin to supporting their local football team. They help finance it, they cheer it on, but they only participate vicariously through the ministry team.

Biblical leaders were natural leaders by virtue of their personal character and God-given abilities, not because of their qualifications. Institutionalisation of the church has brought with it a demand for professionalism that gives greater weight to appropriate academic qualifications than to personal qualities. There is nothing wrong with academic training in theology or ministry, indeed there is much to commend it. Teaching is an important part of leadership, and it should be well informed. Hosea lamented, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). But it forms only one aspect of good leadership. Although it is not the most important one, it tends to be the main pre-requisite for paid workers these days. This can inadvertently create an implied authority based on qualifications that leads to an ungodly respect for persons (because of their qualifications rather than their personal qualities) and a tendency to follow the man (much like the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1-3)) rather than God.

So the development of a "hireling" mentality in church ministry can seriously undermine the intended functioning of churches. John records Jesus' comparison between the good shepherd and the hired hand in John 10:7-18. Similarly, church leadership needs to be exercised by those who know and are known by the members, those who will remain when the professional worker has long gone. How often do we hear of professional workers who have effectively adopted a 'hit and run' approach, devastating the congregation they hardly got to know, and then blaming their lack of spirituality or zeal?

Worst of all, institutionalisation promotes centralised organisational structures. While they promise organisational efficiency, they inevitably lose touch with their membership. The

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84 Elmer L. Towns, *America's Fastest Growing Churches*. (Nashville: Impact Books, 1972), p.181.

Biblical model of more autonomous local structures can, however, better monitor and adapt to the needs and progress of the group they are a part of. It is interesting that this has recently been recognised by many denominations that have transformed their centralised structures from exercising control, to providing support services for more autonomous congregations.

### **Inappropriate Roles**

I have already described how institutionalisation has tended to concentrate ministry in the hands of paid workers – the “clergy”. These church leaders end up doing most of the work themselves rather than enabling all members to participate. Consequently there is no mutual ministry and no one ends up functioning in their proper role.

Church leadership is more like the role of a parent than of an institutional executive. Its function is to look out for and develop its people. Oversight of the spiritual welfare and development of each member is the primary leadership role. In an established church this should be undertaken by a plurality of overseers, call them elders, pastors, shepherds, presbyters or bishops – “They keep watch over you as men who must give an account” (Heb. 13:17). They should be men known to the local church because they have been a part of it and are committed to it. It is simply not a role that can be effectively delegated to a hired professional. Similarly, the secondary leadership role relating to the coordination of activities that meet the physical needs of the congregation, should also be undertaken by people known to the congregation and who know their needs, call them deacons, deaconesses, ministers or servants.

Church members whose spiritual and physical needs have been met and who have been prepared for works of service suited to their giftedness are then free and ready to do their work – the work of the church. The leaders may also participate in this work, but alongside rather than over everyone else.

Another area of concern is that of congregational decision-making. Church leaders are not to lord it over the congregation (1 Peter 5:3), but simply lead the process of decision-making. This is

evident, for example, in the decision-making process of the council at Jerusalem, despite the presence of the apostles as well as the elders of the Jerusalem church. After leaders had discussed the issues at hand, the text records, “Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided ...” (Acts 15:22). Leadership of the decision-making process demands humility to recognise the role is no more than one of servant-hood and facilitation, combining a knowledge of God’s will and sensitivity to the needs and thinking of the members. Its not that the church is a democratic institution, but it is a participative body.

## **Conclusion**

I have identified a few contemporary issues that I believe can be traced to the institutionalisation of church ministry with a view to challenging those in paid ministry to reconsider and/or clarify their role.

Institutionalisation tends to discriminate and isolate, whereas the Biblical model for the church is inclusive and intimate. Ministry is the role of every member, and depends on giftedness and preparation. Leadership is a ministry of spiritual oversight and preparation. It is a honourable ministry, but it should never lose sight of the fact that “those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable” (1 Cor. 12:22).

When leadership is close to the membership and sensitive to their needs, it is most likely to be seen as relevant and is most likely to promote vitality among them. Church leaders should never lose sight of God’s purpose for the organisational expression of the church – that of encouragement and preparation for works of service. The organisation itself is only the means to these ends. When the organisation becomes an end in itself, the inevitable product is institutionalisation and denominationalisation. Ministry then becomes bureaucratic, isolated, and ultimately ineffective. And the church ceases to function as it was intended.

## ***Book Reviews***



***Jesus, Author & Finisher: Timeless Principles of Christianity***

**Brian Mulheran (Synergy, 2002)**

Review by ***Outreach Magazine***, Brisbane.

Brian Mulheran's 200-page book, ***Jesus, Author & Finisher: Timeless Principles of Christianity***, which includes a study guide, is designed to help new Christians, older Christians and pastors desiring to establish people in the faith.

Through his book, Brian hopes to further awaken people to their fullest potential in God. "Every Christian has great potential in their life to do something powerful for God," says Brian. "They know that on the inside, but to see that come to pass, they need to really grab hold of the truths of God's word."

Having been a COC pastor for more than 15 years, Brian has seen thousands of people "come to the altar to have their faith authored, but many of them sadly didn't finish the race". "I see a lot of them struggle, trying to fix things up in their life in order for God to use them, but they end up just going round and round. This book gives

them keys on how to release their potential.”

“Any ordinary person can look at the negatives of life in order not to succeed. Any ordinary person can read passages of scripture that seem to tell them what they need to do or not do in order to ‘keep themselves in God’. Any ordinary person will try to hold their life in God in order to make it to heaven. Any ordinary person can live a respectable life in God. Any ordinary person can pray enough and read their Bible enough in order to appear godly. But the Bible is full of extraordinary truths for ordinary people like you and me to allow our extraordinary God to do extraordinary things through us.”

Now working on a second book about the Holy Spirit, Brian believes many Christians are too pre-occupied with their own issues to focus on God. He says:

What could God do through a person who was not focused on whether or not they would commit any more sins but were totally preoccupied with fulfilling His call?

What could God do through a person who knew they were totally righteous and could stand before God at all times?

What could God do through a person who knew that He could not fail to do anything He said?

What could God do through a person who knew that they had the unlimited resources of heaven at their disposal?

What could God do through a person who knew that He was totally for them?

It is Brian’s desire that, through discovering these truths, readers would look to Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, to lay a foundation from which to fulfil the call that God has placed upon their life.



***South Pacific Revivals: Community and Ecological Transformation***

**By Geoff Waugh (3rd edition 2012)**

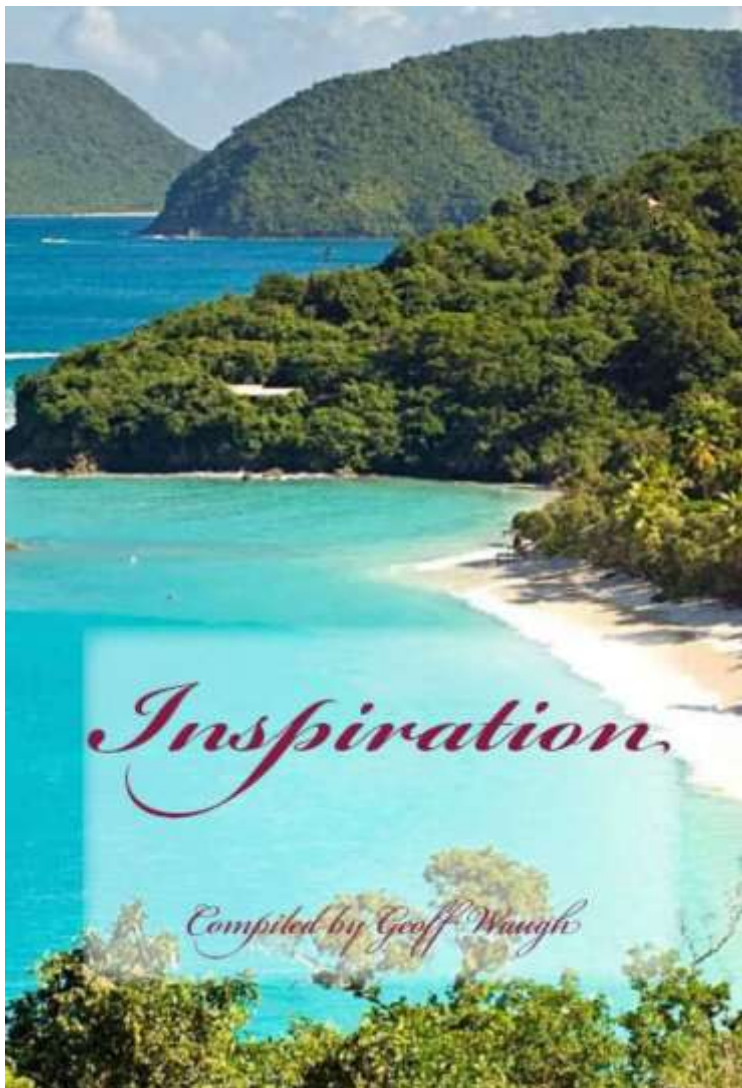
***Useful insight into Revivals in the South Pacific region***

The cover's the immediate attraction with this book – beautiful Pacific Island image ..... Nice large format size book, too.

Geoff Waugh has been fascinated with Christian revivals since he was a young man, so it's no big surprise that he should conduct some research into these fascinating phenomena 'down under' in the South Pacific area, as he has travelled and worked in many of these islands over several decades. His other recent book, *Looking to Jesus: A Journey Into Renewal & Revival* is another book worth checking out, being essentially an auto-biography of the author.

*South Pacific Revivals* gives some very illuminating information about numerous little-known revivals in the region, as well as a number of charismatic movements, one or two of which I personally wouldn't necessarily term 'revivals', but many will find to be of much interest nonetheless, because of the phenomena exhibited and the passion aroused, etc. [The 3rd edition, 2012, has a comprehensive Preface of the history of revivals in the South Pacific.] A surprising number of movements are provided – including islands and places I had never before heard of! A number of remarkable personal testimonies are included, and some black and white photos are dotted throughout the book. Some useful appendices are included, such as 'Characteristics of Revivals from Acts 2' and 'Examples of Repentance and Revival'.

If you're interested in revivals, this is a book you're going to want to get. (Blue Yonder, Amazon)



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*Renewal Journal*  
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*Geoff Waugh (Editor)*

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## ***Contents***

### ***Renewal Journal 20: Life***

Editorial: Life and death	395
1 Life, death and choice, by Ann Crawford	397
2 The God who dies, by Irene Alexander	407
3 The Transforming Grace of Liminality, by Anne Fry & John Meteyard	417
4 Primordial events in theology and science support a life/death ethic, by Martin Rice	431
5 Community Transformation, by Geoff Waugh	449
Reviews and Resources	459

#### **Cover photo: 20 Life**

New life, young and old. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10)..

# *Editorial*

## **Life and Death**

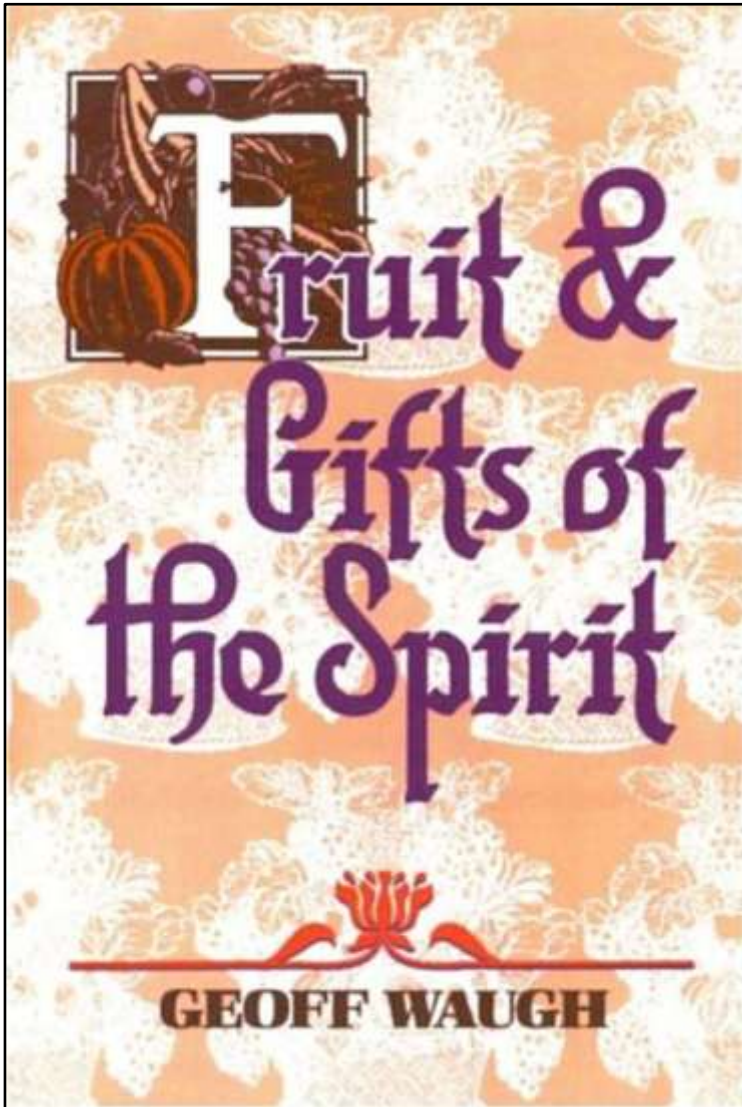
I edited 20 issues of the *Renewal Journal*, beginning from 1993. I am indeed grateful for all the contributors to the *Renewal Journal*. They identified and created cutting edge issues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The second updated editions were published a decade later in 2012. *Renewal Journal* articles are now available on the website: **[www.renewaljournal.com](http://www.renewaljournal.com)**

The *Renewal Journal* is ecumenical and interdenominational in its scope both for writers and readers. Renewal and revival transcend our divisions and transform our relationships. I am grateful. The 21<sup>st</sup> century continues to see the spread of powerful, current revival and renewal movements worldwide.

Most of the articles in this issue were presented and discussed at the 2003 Contemporary Issues in Ministry conference held at the School of Ministries of Christian Heritage College in Brisbane. Their titles indicate their content. They invite and challenge us to die to the old and rise to the new.

Death is painful, especially where love is deep and strong. The longer we live, the more we have to live with the pain of that loss of loved ones (parent, spouse, relative, friend) and the loss of loved things (possessions, activities, vocations) until ultimately our own death transforms us and unites us in perfect love.

Meanwhile, if we choose to die to self-centred living, we can live in resurrection life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Gal 2:20).



*Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit*  
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# *1 Life, death and choice*

## **Ann Crawford**



*Pastor Ann Crawford (Ph.D. candidate) wrote as the Pastor-in-Charge of Citipointe Transformations in Christian Outreach Centre, and teaches Pastoral Care subjects at Citipointe Ministry College, the School of Ministries of Christian Heritage College, Brisbane.*

### **Abstract**

God's command in Deuteronomy 30:19 - I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; choose life that you and your descendants may live... - sounds simple and extremely logical. Most would agree that, in practice, following this command is not that simple. Many factors cloud these choices, detract from the logic and create a complexity that causes people to continue to walk in the wayward footsteps that led Adam to a finite existence on earth.

As these issues of life and death choices are fundamental in the individual's quest for wholeness and therefore pertinent to the people-helping ministry of today's church, this paper explores these concepts by examining life, death and choice; by identifying

blockages and deceptions experienced in our twenty-first century life-journeys; and by delving into the philosophy of existential suffering.

## **Introduction**

“Throughout the whole of life one must continue to learn how to live, and what will amaze you even more, throughout life one must learn to die” (Seneca in Peck, 1997: 89). These words penned centuries ago contemplate the paradox that is life and death, for to consider one is to be conscious of the other. In accordance with Hebraic philosophy, we do not have an “either/or” choice for ultimately every person encompasses the “also/and” of living and dying. So it would seem that the issue for the human person is not so much a choice between life and death but that “a deep consciousness of death ultimately leads us on a path to seeking meaning” (Peck, 1997: 88).

Abrahams (1961: 242) quotes from Jewish philosophy as he writes, “Much of the difficulty of the problem of evil is . . . due to the human belief that he (the individual man) is the centre of creation. There is evil: but many so-called evils are nothing other than features of a life which includes death.” Jesus’ expounds this philosophy as He tells a story (Luke 12:16-21) of a successful farmer whose bumper crop could not be contained in his storehouses. The farmer’s decision to tear down his barns to build bigger ones was not the evil that incurred the wrath of God. After a lifetime of living, this man had missed the meaning. “Soul, you have many good things laid up, [enough] for many years. Take your ease; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself merrily.”

For those in the people helping professions, this “missing the meaning” of life – and death - is of vital significance, both in our day-to-day stories and in what Snyder (1995: 194) terms the “Divine Design” story, characterised by “finding and doing the will of God”. Consider God’s reply to the farmer where he not only paints a graphic picture of human mortality but he also highlights the consequences of the choice to find meaning in self-achievement and material possessions. “You fool! This night they [the

messengers of God] will demand your soul of you; and all the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

It would appear that, in God's economy, a meaningless life equates to a meaningless death and both incur his displeasure. Therefore, another avenue of thought emerges from this story that further augments this investigation of life, death and choice. This is the existential search for meaning described by Corey (1996: 171) as the struggle "between the security of dependence and the delights and pains of growth". Security is one of the person's basic needs, and, in a postmodern society which Snyder (1995: 218) sees as being "the triumph of the contingent, the transitory and the ironic", security is often sought in codependency and pain is to be avoided. These choices side-track the meaningful process leading from suffering to peaceful wholeness.

Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds us that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all of the words of this law". This paper will presuppose that the text of Deuteronomy 30:19 - "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; choose life that you and your descendants may live . . ." - is the revealed word of God and will undertake this investigation of life, death and choice, not primarily from a theological perspective but from relevant literature, particularly that which pertains to people-helping and pastoral caring. From this vantage-point it would appear that not only do the topics of life, death and choice warrant a deeper probing but that there are other issues that are inextricably intertwined into their inter-relatedness. The existential search for meaning, freewill and freedom, and the over-shadowing limitations and extremes of worldview and culture add to the complexity of the life/death-decisions that human beings are faced with daily.

## **Life**

The Hebrew word commonly translated "life" means alive, fresh, strong and is explained by Lockyer, as the "physical functions of people, animals and plants" (1986: 649). This writer continues, "because God is the source of all life, it is a gift from Him. He first filled Adam with the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), and He continues to be

the source of all life". In the New Testament the Greek "psyche" describes the breath or spirit of life. "The word 'life' began to refer to more than physical existence. It took on a strong spiritual meaning, often referring to the spiritual life that results from man's relationship with God" (Lockyer, 1986: 649).

From these interpretations it could be deduced that "life" can be defined on several different levels. The most rudimentary of these indicates any form of living thing but even this basic understanding proposes a mystery that scientists down through the ages have sought to unravel. For the last half-century, biochemists have sought for a mechanism by which non-living molecules could make the transition to living systems.

Transcending these empirical deliberations, Holmes (1983: 121) comments that a Christian worldview understands "human life as a body-soul dualism in close organic unity, so that we function in many if not all regards as holistic beings." Boivin (1995: 157) describes a Hebraic model of the person as conceptualising "the various dimensions of personhood as existing along a mutually interactive continuum to which the divinely inspired aspects of the human condition are directly apparent in the biopsychological aspects, without intermediate metaphysical states or constructs". Paul preached to the Greeks, "in him I live and move and have my being" (Acts 17:28), echoing the holistic theories of these scholars and challenging the Platonic philosophical dualism that the body is the prison of the soul (Moreland and Ciochi, 1993: 39).

## **Death**

Death could be described as the absence of life. However, the American President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioural Research (1983: 174-75) defines death as, "the state in which all components of mental life are gone, including self-awareness, thought, emotion, feeling and sensation." In an effort to clarify the dilemma of organ-transplant doctors, this definition admits that a human being is more than physiological by incorporating elements that are more usually associated with the "soul" to identify human life – or the absence thereof. This definition would indicate that, at some point



in the dying process, there is a separation of body, being the material part of the human person, and the immaterial soul, a position confirmed by the writer of Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it". Moreland and Ciochi (1993: 39) comment that, "this combination of material and spiritual resulted in a holistic 'living soul.'" However, these authors continue with the observation that, "there is no indication in the creation account that this combination was ever intended to be separated."

This notion of separation leads to the contemplation of another dimension of death. "Death occurs when something is separated from that which is its life. Since the living God is the 'fountain of life' (Ps. 36:9), the action of man turning from him can only result in death" (Moreland and Ciochi, 1993: 46).

## **Choice**

Choice creates the impression of selecting from presented options and consequently is predominantly associated with freewill and the consequences. Scriptural references, like the one from Deuteronomy 30:19, portray God, at various times through history, as offering his people a choice, delineating the options and describing the consequences both positive and negative, both good and evil. Once the information has been delivered, God then allows His Image Bearer the freewill to not only make that choice but also to bear the consequences.

The first biblical choice encountered is the choice Adam and Eve made when confronted with tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had commanded that they "may freely eat of every tree of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it for in that day you shall surely die" (Gen 2:15-17). The Genesis account of the fall graphically illustrates the significance of the exercise of freewill, as Adam and Eve are banished from the garden and from the sweet communion with Father God they had experienced there. Peck (1997: 150-51) writes about this relationship between choice and freewill. "What I do know is that we have the power of choice. It is said that God created us in His own image. What is meant by that, more than anything else . . . is

that He gave us free will. We are free to choose, for good or for ill, according to our will, and not even God can heal someone against her will". Jesus did not minister or teach in his own home town as the family and friends of his childhood had set their freewill against him and the healings and the miracles experienced by others passed them by (Luke 14:23-30).

In Frankl's account of his experiences in the Auchwitz camps he delves deeper into the questions of choice, freewill and suffering. "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way" (Frankl, 1984: 86). Frankl's observations of the human person, trapped in the horrendous circumstances of a Nazi concentration camp for a protracted length of time, revealed to him that it is possible to make choices, and, in fact, to make choices that would enable a man or a woman to craft excruciating suffering into bravery, unselfishness and dignity and to "add a deeper meaning to his/her life" (1984: 88).

The philosophy of the various dimensions of human freedom, while being a fascinating study, is far beyond the scope of this paper. However, for the purpose of this essay, a summary of Satre's observations (in Corey, 1996: 174) is sufficient: "We are constantly confronted with the choice of what kind of person we are becoming, and to exist is never to be finished with this kind of choosing".

### **God's blueprint**

*I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction (Deut. 30:19)*

Human beings must then choose between two covenantal ways, the two possible responses to God's laws for our life. We cannot *not* respond. We live only in covenant relation to our Maker. We exit only in response to his sovereign rule (Walsh and Middleton, 1984: 65, 66).

This is a God of justice. As the above authors allege, whether the choices are understood or even known, God still holds every human being accountable for these choices.

The pastoral carer is not only confronted with these choices in the course of his/her own existence but is called to work with people who are also in the process of becoming. Those who have no cognition of the covenant relationship God has ordained necessarily suffer from a warped ability to make choices. As outlined in scripture (eg. Deut 27,28), all behaviour, all choices have consequences and the curses that result from choosing death are just as real as the blessings that flow from life choices. Does this mean that those who are unaware of their choices, who believe they have no right to make a choice or who have been programmed with wrong information with which to choose, are doomed to death?

However, "Just as we cannot be neutral in relation to him, so he is not neutral towards us" (Walsh and Middleton, 1984: 66). The cross is ample evidence of a merciful God who actively upholds his covenants.

Underpinning the ministry of pastoral caring is the biblical mandate to bring to the broken-hearted the message that God is not neutral. He is a Father who is vitally interested in the well being of his children and he has a plan and purpose for each one. At the opposite end of the scale is an awareness that no human being is able to be neutral and this revelation opens the way for the covenant to be proclaimed and the choices to be revealed.

### **The place of suffering in making choices**

But, could it be that we often do not recognise the life-choice before us because the death-choice presents as the "soft-option"? A loving father nurtures and protects his child. However, that does not discount the inevitability that the child will, at times be exposed to pain, grief and suffering. A loving father will not, in fact cannot, prevent his child from suffering but he will teach and guide his child to choose the life option despite the pain. So it is with Father God.

Peck cites missionary/physician Paul Brand's research into leprosy and explains that most "of the devastation of leprosy is caused by a localised absence of pain" (Peck, 1997: 28). When there is no pain, injury and infection remain unnoticed and untreated, eventually leading to disfigurement and death. Pain is a signal that something is wrong, that something needs to change. Although physical pain can range from unpleasant to unbearable there is usually some treatment that can be administered that will relieve the discomfort. However,

We do not like emotional pain any more than physical pain, and our natural instinct is to avoid it or get rid of it as quickly as possible. We are pain-avoiding creatures. Since it is a conflict between our will and reality that causes our pain, our first and natural response to the problem is to deal with it by imposing our will to make reality conform to what we want of it (Peck, 1997: 63).

Pastoral carers predominantly work with people experiencing emotional pain. It is this emotional pain that often drives the sufferer to choose the death-option - not physical death or suicide but the kind of choice that focuses on gratifying and comforting self and/or projecting the pain onto others.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the philosophy of postmodernism dictates that we construct our own reality, that we impose our own reality upon the facts. The consequences of imposing our will upon our circumstances opposes the commands of God to follow his statutes, to choose to allow him to impose his will upon us. The natural projection of this would be that people in a postmodern society would be likely to experience a considerable amount of emotional pain. Pastors and those in the people-helping professions, would, I am sure, support these observations.

Frankl (1984: 154-155), in his dissertations on suffering, emphasised "that human life, under any circumstances, never ceases to have meaning, and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death". He identifies the components of that meaning: hope in the future; experiences of the past; unconditional love; and purposeful sacrifice. People-helpers

have a mandate to know that, “the world in which we live is divine destiny. There is a divine meaning in the life of every individual and of you and me” (Buber in Bruno, 2000: 29). Those suffering emotional pain are searching for that meaning, whether they are aware of it or not, and the people-helper is called to encounter, empower and encourage these fellow children of God.

## Conclusion

Frankl (1984: 95) quotes Spinoza when he writes, “Emotion, which is suffering, ceases to be suffering as soon as we form a clear and precise picture of it”. By defining life, death and choice, and the intertwining and interrelated aspects of these topics, perhaps a clearer picture of the human sufferings and the human joys of life and death may be better understood. There is a curious security, a peace that passes understanding in being in intimate relationship with a God of paradox – justice and mercy, majesty and love, law and grace – with a Father who beseeches us to “choose life, that you and your descendants may live”.

On further reflection, life redefined becomes a pilgrimage, a deliberate journey of valleys and mountain tops. In God’s entreaty for us to choose life, perhaps he is longing for us to extract from this time we have here on earth as much meaning and purpose as we can, that while we live, we really live, and that we can take this divine energy called life and, in some way, impart it to those who experience this journey with us. Death, that dark foreboding that looms over us all, is not the destination of life but maybe even a facet of life that helps us to extract the last residue of meaning from suffering and joy alike giving us the choice to make the transition from one state to the other in unbroken fellowship with our Maker.

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## ***2 The God who dies: Exploring themes of life and death***

**Irene Alexander**



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A central theme of the Word is the recurring pattern of life – death – life. “Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, ..emptied himself, ..and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.” And the cross, and what it represents, has become the symbol of our faith, faith in a God who dies to give life. The spirituality of our faith is thus a spirituality of descent - knowing this descending God who seeks to serve, not to be served. And with this spirituality we become men and women who can reach out to those around us who are broken, and we can befriend our own places of woundedness.

One of the great themes of the Bible is the recurring pattern of life – death – life. In the first chapters God creates life in the garden where stands the tree of life. But we, foolish beings, chose death, and separation from life. The rest of the Bible tells of the finding of our way back to Life, and eventually a new heaven and a new earth.

The story of the Exodus is of life once held, lost in slavery, and then journeying through death, through the wilderness, to life again in the promised land. The promised land is a place flowing with milk and honey, but through turning away from relationship with God, the only true life, the Israelites find themselves in death again – in exile, until God brings them through to life again, redeeming them.

The very theme of the Christian life is death to the old, symbolised by baptism and new life in Christ. Baptism is an identification with the life-death-life theme of God's own life, death and life. What does it mean that God himself chose this theme, this process to win us to himself? And that he wove it into the seasons of the year, reminding us over and over that death comes, but through death, the rising to new life?

### **God on a cross**

I remember being struck, when reading C. S. Lewis's biography, that one of the things that brought him to salvation, rather late in life, was his pondering on the idea of a God who dies. Apparently a colleague remarked one day, casually, and with only passing interest "Rum thing that, God on a cross". The idea confronted C. S. Lewis and he mused over it eventually being totally challenged by this God who died.

Sometimes as Christians we get so used to the idea of the Cross that we lose the shock of it – God, the life-giver, the almighty, the Creator – giving away his life, his might, his being. Yet this is the central theme of the Bible and of the gospels and of the life of the Christ. "Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2: 6-8).

The crucified God is the centrepiece of our faith. And those of us who grew up with an empty cross as our focus knew it was only empty because life is born out of death, because God himself had died so that we too may live. And the cross, and what it represents has become the symbol of our faith, faith in a God who dies to give



life.

## A descending God

Cosby (1998) explains that the God of Philippians 2, and of the gospels is a 'descending God'. Whereas the focus of much of the western world is *ascent* to success and status and power, the way of the Christ is through taking the form of a servant, humbling himself even to death. Says Cosby, "In the Gospel it is quite obvious that Jesus chose the descending way. He chose it not once but over and over again. At each critical moment he deliberately sought the way downward" (p. 28).

Again, "...it becomes plain to us that God has willed to show his love for the world by descending more and more deeply into human frailty...God is the descending God. The movement is down, down, down, until it finds the sickest, the most afflicted, the most helpless, the most alienated, the most cut off. The truest symbols that we have of Jesus are the lamb – the lamb led to the slaughter, a sheep before its shearers being dumb. Total poverty: a dumb sheep, the Lamb of God, and the Servant Christ kneeling with a towel and a basin, washing feet on the eve of his crucifixion. The weeping Christ riding into Jerusalem on a donkey" (p. 29).

And wonder of wonders it is not the Lion of Judah who is worthy to open the scroll which ushers in the end of time, but rather the Lamb. The apostle John tells in Revelation 5:4 "I wept because no-one was found who was worthy to open the scroll...Then one of the elders said to me 'Do not weep! See the Lion of the tribe of Judah... is able to open the scroll.. Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if he had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne.'"

Through being the Lamb, Jesus conquered death. It was through his dying that he defeated the powers and authorities, "triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 2:15). And Cosby (1998) notes that it was his death that turned our hearts to him also. "What was it that captured our hearts? It was that figure dying on a cross... If the Lamb of God... the form of the Servant Christ giving his life away for others – for me – if those deep expressions of reality captured my spirit, literally broke my hard heart of stone and gave

me a heart of flesh, ended my captivity and delivered my spirit, why do I think that the expression of authority or power or success or efficiency is going to break anybody's heart?" (p. 30).

### **A self-emptying God**

The God who Cosby (1998) calls the descending God, Maggie Ross (1988) in *Pillars of Flame* explores as the self-emptying God – this is the meaning of *kenosis*: “The heart of Christianity is the self-emptying, kenotic humility of God expressed in Jesus the Christ... At the heart of God's humility is this: God willingly is wounded” (p. xvi). “...a kenotic living God who is unceasingly self-outpouring, compassionate, and engaged with the creation.... God's inviolable vulnerability, God's unswerving commitment to suffer with and within the creation, to go to the heart of pain, to generate new life, hope, and joy out of the cry of dereliction, out of the pain to utter self-denudation, utter self-emptying, utter engaging love” (p. 72). Indeed this is the character of the prodigal's father – the willingness to give, to suffer the pain of loss and wounding, to hold back in patient waiting, to respond in self-forgetting joy and forgiveness.

The spirituality of descent is the practice of a spirituality which knows this descending God. Rather than the all-powerful Zeus-god of the Greeks, prodigal children know the God who gives, the God who waits, the God who experiences the shame and brokenness of his own. This descending God seeks to serve, not to be served, not just in the life-time of Jesus but in the millennia following, in the present world, where it is so easy to choose ascent, success, status, positions of power in our churches and 'Christian' institutions.

Jesus deliberately broke the purity codes of his culture in order to include the outcasts (Sims 1997). Time after time, at meals, in the homes of Pharisees, in public places, he knowingly touched the untouchables – the bleeding woman, the leper, the Samaritan woman. “Suppose the only God that exists is the descending God. Suppose the only way we can know God is to go down, to go to the bottom...If God is going down and we are going up, it is obvious that we are going in different directions. And we will not know him. We will be evading God and missing the whole purpose of our existence” (Cosby 1998, p. 31).

The descending God then, is one who serves, one who lets go of position and status and power, in order to touch the lives of those around him. “We have seen what Jesus was like. If we wish now to treat him as our God, we would have to conclude that our God does not want to be served by us, he wants to serve” (Nolan cited in Sims 1997 p. 16).

It is significant to note what John says about Jesus at the beginning of the story of the Servant Christ who washed his disciples’ feet: “Jesus, knowing that the father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God... girded himself with a towel” (John 13:3). Jesus was a servant who also knew his identity – he was not serving as one who did not know his boundaries, or one trying to earn approval. He knew who he was, but knowingly chose to serve.

### **Servant leadership**

In his book *The Leadership Paradox* Denny Gunderson (1997) notes that Jesus said very little about leadership. Rather his lifestyle demonstrated servanthood – “I came not to be served but to serve”. This book explores a number of stories of Jesus’ life to help us discover what servanthood meant in the reality of daily relationships. Gunderson notes that the Greek word Jesus chose for servant was ‘*diakonos*’ which literally mean ‘through the dust’. He tells the story of a servant who leads a caravan to safety through a dust storm even though it meant sacrificing his own life. Our word deacon comes from this Greek word and is translated servant, deacon, or minister. Gunderson then explores other gospel stories showing a God who walked through the dust of earth to his death in order that we might find what it is to live as servants, loving our God and loving each other. This is what Gordon Cosby means by the spirituality of descent, that we learn to live as deacons, servants, who are not afraid of walking in the dust, and in the dark places of people’s lives – and of our own.

Henri Nouwen (1989) tells the story of confronting his own dark places and learning to care for others in theirs in his powerful book on Christian leadership *In the Name of Jesus*. Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic priest who became a lecturer at Harvard and Yale. He was

an extremely popular speaker and writer. As he entered his fifties though, he realised that he was “living in a very dark place and that the term ‘burnout’ was a convenient psychological translation for a spiritual death.

In the midst of this I kept praying, “Lord, show me where you want me to go and I will follow you... In the person of Jean Vanier, the founder of L’Arche communities for mentally handicapped people, God said, “Go and live among the poor in spirit, and they will heal you.”... So I moved from Harvard to L’Arche, from the best and brightest, wanting to rule the world, to men and women who had few or no words, and were considered, at best, marginal to the needs of our society... the small, hidden life with people whose broken minds and bodies demand a strict daily routine in which words are the least requirement does not immediately appear as the solution to burnout. And yet, my new life at L’Arche is offering me new words to use in speaking about Christian leadership. (pp. 11-12).

Nouwen focuses on servanthood and the specific barriers which might prevent us from being true servant leaders – the need to be relevant, the need to be spectacular and the need to control, to be powerful.

In another of his books, *Return of the Prodigal Son*, Nouwen (1996) helps us identify other blockages to serving others. He describes us – the prodigal – discovering the utterly endless, ever responsive love of a Father – who would pick up his robe and run to meet us as we are - foot-sore and ragged, dirty and wounded – and take us in his arms in delighted self-giving welcome.

And as I discover that totally accepting love, which takes me to himself – and holds my pain and my shame, my sin and my brokenness, and simply holds all in his love, so I dare little by little to see myself as I am, to lower my defences enough to see my own brokenness. And part of my seeing is a recognition that I, too, am the elder brother. In me is judgement and resentment, envy and exclusion. In me is reaction that causes me to exclude myself from the celebration of grace – the grace of a Father who embraces the sinner, who goes towards the outcast and the shameful ones, who

indeed *runs* to bid them welcome. And slowly, slowly I too acknowledge in myself the judgements and criticism, the self-righteousness and legalism which hold me aloof from my brothers and sisters, which indeed hold me aloof from the broken and sinful places of my own being. And I seek to learn what it is to embrace my own fallenness, and that of my brothers and sisters. And too, to let them see me as I am and to hold me in grace.

A difficult lesson this one - to know it is my own self-judgement that causes me to hold others at arm's length lest they see me too well. And so I hold myself back from receiving their embrace, and the grace of the Father mediated through them. I prefer my image of my own self-righteousness and hold myself in isolation in order to retain it. But slowly as I receive the love of the Father I can allow my defensiveness to thaw little by little and allow others to see the imperfect being that I am. It is only as I learn to hold the paradox of my own mix of light and darkness, that I can learn to celebrate with another their own pattern of shadow and light. And the willingness to walk in humility, says Nouwen (1989), will lead to "a leadership in which power is constantly abandoned in favour of love" (p. 63).

### **A God "disenthroned"**

As we reflect on the prodigal's father, who stoops to embrace the sinner, we know that Jesus is indeed God's self-disclosure - "the cosmos is ruled by a self-giving Love who chooses to endure crucifixion rather than decree any abridgment of human freedom" (Sims 1997 p. 17). "We cannot have it both ways. We cannot have a God who is an iron-handed ruler in remote control of the cosmos and, at the same time, a historic incarnation of that God who consistently defines himself as a servant... [We must] choose between a God enthroned in the power of imperial privilege and a God "disenthroned" in the more exquisite power of servanthood" (p. 17).

And the paradox is that once we have glimpsed this servant-King, who tells us that his flesh must be our real food, that we must learn to feed on his brokenness and self-giving, that even though we may be tempted to draw back, we are so drawn to him that we say, as Peter did "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of

eternal life” (John 6: 68). And even then we may, as Peter did, be prepared to give our lives to fight for him, but not know how to give our selves in the surrender and powerlessness of the Lamb. But this is the way to life.

“Just as crucifixion and resurrection form the centrepiece of the life and work of Jesus, so too the cross and its promise of life reborn are central to his invitation to live” (Sims 1997, p. 48). The crucifixion is not just a plan God thought up to ‘fix things up’ after humans rebelled. “The Crucified God is simply the eruption into history of the cosmic redemptive love that is built into the structure of the universe from its start. The book of Revelation speaks of Jesus as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8, KJV)” (Sims 1997 p. 58). Relationship with the God who dies is relationship with Life.

### **The God who dies**

One of our difficulties in talk about dying is that it touches on our own very natural fear of death and the process of dying. Nouwen (1998), in noticing his own fears suggests a key reason for this: “You are still afraid to die. Maybe that fear is connected with some deep unspoken worry that God will not accept you as his.” For death has to do with separation and the death God speaks of in the Garden – when you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall die – is the death of separation from God. One of the purposes of life is to lose our fear of death. It is only in deepening our revelation of God’s love for us that our fear of death is lessened. John speaks of our growing understanding of God’s love (in 1 John 4: 18) “perfect love casts out fear”. If I truly know I am loved I am no longer afraid.

But what of the fear of the other death? The death that is part of this process of our living through the seasons of life? The death represented in the Wisdom literature by the wilderness, exile, the dark night of the soul? We draw back from these dyings too, afraid that questionings, doubt, old answers that no longer fit, will be death to us. The mystics assure us that these too are the way to life. “She came up out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved” (Song of Solomon 8:5). And Rilke (1996) in his direct, even raw, poetry notices how our own need, our own darkness, can lead to God:

“Then suddenly you’re left all alone  
With your body that can’t love you,  
And your will that can’t save you.  
But now, like a whispering in dark streets  
Rumors of God run through your dark blood” (p. 76).

It is in these dark places, these places of liminality, that transformation takes place. But so often we shrink from this as if it were death. If we understand the process of life-death-life we dare to respond to pain and death as possible resurrection – as Eucharist. “The pain of transformation is morbid [ie death-dealing] only if we choose it to be, only if we do not want to look beyond and through it. If only we allow, the pain itself is transformed and becomes Eucharist; and Eucharist deepens us until we burn with Love in God’s very heart. If we spend all our time trying to block out pain with illusion or to twist it to inflate our egos, we will stagnate; we will cause in ourselves the destructive pain of disintegration” (Ross 1988, p. 133).

The mystics understood this process and assure us that it is in the darkness that we find the Beloved. In *The Dark Night* St John of the Cross names the darkness, the absence of God’s felt presence, as the very place that we will be united with the Beloved, and indeed transformed:

Oh guiding night!  
O night more lovely than the dawn!  
O night that has united  
The Lover with His beloved,  
Transforming the beloved in her Lover.

This then is true relationship with God – a faith that God is present, that even though the floods may come, and the fire, God is present. And this relationship enables us to journey with others in their wilderness and their darkness – having faith that God too, is for them, and with them. “Faith is not assent to doctrines or surrounding ourselves with props and propositions. It is trust that God – as Christ shows us – has been there before us, goes within us, waits to find us beyond the edges of utter dark. And, found by God, we become aware that God is closer to our being than we are” (Ross 1988, p. 135). This then, is the God who has lived through life,

death and life, has shown us the way through, and now is present with each of us as we walk the same journey.

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### ***3 The Transforming Grace of Liminality***

**Anne Fry and John Meteyard**



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Rohr (1999) asserts that the only way out of our entrapment in normalcy (*the way things are*) is to be drawn into sacred space, often called *liminality*, where all genuine transformation occurs. *Liminality*, from the Latin word for *threshold*, is the state of being betwixt and between where the old world has been left behind but we have not arrived at what is to come.

This paper attempts to develop a biblical understanding of *liminality* using metaphors of wilderness, tomb and exile. It seeks to reconcile the paradox of the apparent hiddenness of God and the

concurrent opportunity to see him anew, that occurs at these times. Ministry applications for those working with people in *liminal* space is briefly engaged.

### **Defining *Liminality***

One part of the landscape on the spiritual journey that often produces confusion and uncertainty is what Rohr (1999, p. 132) calls *liminality* (from the Latin *limen*), meaning *threshold*. This bewildering phenomena, familiar in the biblical pattern and evidenced in the lives of the *great crowd of witnesses* (Heb 12:10), creates for a time, either contextual or inner dissonance which, when its work is complete, bears fruit. While little understood during its occurrence, in retrospect one can identify that through the profoundness of God's transforming grace, there has been some deconstruction of false towers of existence, and some reshaping of the self, in readiness for inhabiting the new dwelling place on the journey.

Various writers seek to capture the essence of this spiritual space in different ways. Tournier (1968, p. 163) talks of the experience of being in between, such as between the time we leave home and arrive at our destination. Peterson (2000, p. 20) captures some of the tension of the space by likening it to the time when the trapeze artist is suspended in midair who, having let go of the bar, awaits support from the catcher. Dumm (1987, pp. 59 - 62) speaks of wilderness, which he asserts follows the acceptance by the believer of God's call to leave the familiar and secure past for a movement into an uncertain, unfamiliar but hopefully life-giving future. Rohr's (1999, p. 132) use of liminality portrays the idea of being betwixt and between, where the old world is left behind, but we're not sure of the new one yet. The thread common to all these writers is a sense of displacement (Nouwen, Mcneill and Morrison, 1982, p. 63), that sense of being in no man's land, where the landscape appears completely different, there is no discernable road map, and where the journeyer is jolted out of normalcy.

### **Personal Experience of *Liminality***

A reflective revisiting of one's spiritual journey will most probably

reveal more than one such experience. As I (Anne) scan the years of my spiritual life I can identify three significant periods of *liminality*. However, my most recent experience began its work in January, 2000. As with the rest of the world, the dawning of the new millennium was significant for me. I had this inescapable sense that God was saying, *three years and then change*. While this was the extent of the revelation, as a woman who has sought for thirty years to be responsive to God's call and purpose in my life, I sat up with attention. My response was one of asking God to prepare me, equip me, teach me and to mould me and to bring to being whatever was in his heart.

What followed at first, was a heightened awareness of, and great intensification of, what was spiritual normalcy for me. His voice was more easily discerned, prayer deeper, insight became sharper, and I strongly felt that God was at work readying me for some unspecified role of ministering to others in a pastoral capacity. In response, I commenced further study to credential myself for what might lie ahead.

With the benefit of hindsight I realise however, that accompanying this gift of heightened spiritual engagement and appropriate desire for preparedness, was my own overwhelming need for my woundedness to be covered, to be seen as normal in the sight of others, and as special to God. In actuality I had fallen into the trap of what Nouwen (1989, pp. 38–39) dubs the temptation to be *spectacular* or *individually heroic*, and that at a very deep inner place, my ego was in the ascent and I was at work, again, constructing my own identity as a more spiritual one.

God, the one who transforms us by the constancy of his love (2 Cor 3:18 NIV, Mic 3:18 GNB) didn't abandon me in that place of falsity. About eighteen months later, the landscape suddenly shifted, as I was thrust into a completely unfamiliar space that could only be likened to wandering in a wilderness. God's voice could not be heard, scripture was as dust, compassion could not be found within, and discernment and insight was something that I could no longer fathom. Accompanying this apparent silence from heaven, was a deep awareness of my distorted self.

For the next twelve months, I traversed the landscape of my liminality, and paradoxically, lived in two planes of being and knowing. On one plane, there was a level of scandal and horror, as I began to perceive the falseness of my ascendant self for the first time. It seemed as if there was a certain lie in all my earnestness to serve God and to love others; as if, at a very primary level, all my efforts were for the wrong reasons – for a seeking of validation from God and others. This was a very shocking idea with which to be confronted. As I tried to make sense of this time of wilderness, Rohr's (1999, p. 132) words resonated within, it's a time where nothing looks like what we're used to, like the time after the death of someone you love, and in this case, it was the death of my own sense of self. As time unfolded, I felt more uncertain in my spirituality than ever before amid my intense sense of anguish and grieving over the false self (Pennington, 2000, p. 36) and a collapse of the familiar propellants to do and to be.

Conversely and simultaneously on another plane, however, there were glimpses of an equally intense relief as I entered into experiences of deep listening through contemplation and solitude. As I sat or walked in silence and solitude, it was as if my whole being experienced new levels of knowing, seeing, being and belonging. As I looked out from this perspective, I sensed that this might be the most extraordinary and integrative experience of my spiritual journey.

In the earlier stages of this two-planed experience of being and knowing, I was troubled and highly confused about the paradox that I was encountering. Those who knew me well and were looking on as bystanders must also have experienced confusion about what was happening in my spiritual world. On one hand, those observable aspects of my spirituality that were usually exercised within community were not present, such as actively contributing in a leadership capacity in corporate spiritual activities such as staff devotions, prayer meetings or preaching in chapel or in one to one situations such as pastoral ministry to students. Yet on the other hand, some would have been aware of a movement within me towards inner peace, tranquillity and, quite startlingly, a beginning capacity to live with contradictions (Rohr, 2001, p. 34). As time passed I came to more easily dwell within the mystery of paradox, which is perhaps something of what Merton (quoted in

Palmer, 1993, p. 17) was referring to when he wrote, I have had to accept the fact that my life is almost totally paradoxical.

Within this space of liminality, I received the gift of acceptance from those around me, who never challenged or confronted me, but rather held me with cords of loving-kindness. Some responded to me as if all was normal. Others gently and appropriately brought solace through bearing witness to the constancy of God's love by listening and trying to make meaning of liminal reality, while writers such as Dumm (1987), Nouwen (1975) and Vanier (1988) served as prophets to me as they validated the movements within my journey.

This season of *liminality* drew to an end at the end of 2002, when just as unexpectedly as I had been thrust into this space, a veil pulled back, and I knew that I had emerged into a sense of light and freedom. God's purposes for the next season of my life had also become clear. As I seek to make meaning of this experience I note several things. I have an increased sense of the legitimacy of my unique spiritual journey. There is a consciousness that this is my walk which is shaped by many unique elements of self. Origins, family, spiritual experiences, giftings and opportunities all intersect in the self. Therefore, I cannot impose the landscape of my journey on anyone else, neither should they impose their landscape on me.

I sense that all we can really do is listen, encourage, reveal tentatively what we've learnt, provide tools and opportunities for others, trust others, and hold up a mirror which affirms that the *secret inner stuff* is actually universal and shared and is part of the bringing in from isolation to shared experience. I sense that we can absolutely trust a loving father who draws with cords of lovingkindness (Jer 31:3 NIV). I sense that God is both desiring me and helping me to take tentative steps towards my *true self* (Pennington, 2000, p. 45), and that as Julian of Norwich (1980, p. viii) says despite any outward circumstances, *all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well*.

### **Biblical Metaphors of *Liminality***

Having considered the experience of *liminality* from both the personal perspective of Anne's story and some of the growing field

of literature that discusses this deeply paradoxical aspect of the Christian journey, it is now important to reflect on what the scriptures reveal about this experience. For many, the idea that God may lead through periods of profound uncertainty, deconstruction and questioning is foreign and inherently difficult to understand, yet the biblical narratives are infused with individual stories and metaphors which reveal this experience.

Perhaps the central biblical metaphor, which describes liminality, is that of tomb - the space between death and resurrection. Oliver (2003, July 31) believes that the biblical motif of death and resurrection or *life-death-life* is the greatest theme of Christian spirituality. Its ultimate expression is in Jesus' own death and resurrection, however, it is also a continual emphasis of his teaching, as illustrated in the need for Nicodemus to be *born again* (John 3:3-4) to enter the kingdom of God and in Jesus' invitation to deny oneself, take up one's cross daily and follow him (Luke 9:23).

Revealed in Anne's story is the central purpose of the *tomb* experience - the need to die to the present sense of self, to old ways of being and doing. This process, never easy or painless, often involves a deep sense of suffering and grief as one dis-identifies *with the old and acknowledges that the past (really) has passed* (Oliver, 1999, p. 61). Yet a person's journey through suffering and death, and waiting through the long nights of the *tomb* can be joined with the great story of the scriptures - the paschal mystery. Jesus, who walked through his own Gethsemane and crucifixion, offers to walk with those experiencing the dark night of the soul and places of loss and suffering (Brown, Brown, Janetzki, Meteyard & O'hara, 2003, p. 8). Paul reflects this in his desire *to know Christ... and to share in the fellowship of his sufferings becoming like him in his death* (Phil 3:10). Significantly, the scriptures also show that Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection were personally transformational for him (Heb 2:10).

Nouwen (1992, p. 77) suggests that rather than viewing the brokenness and pain that accompanies *liminality* as unwelcome intrusions, befriending the suffering as an intimate companion will faithfully lead to the resurrection and transformation that lies beyond the *tomb*. For although the dark nights that accompany

*liminality* feel like dying, ultimately it is not death. As Keating (2000, p. 24) explains, *liminality* contains the promise of new life and of liberation from the false self and as seen in Anne's story, it facilitates a movement away from old and ascendant ways of being and doing towards some further sense of the *true self* (Pennington, 2000, p. 45).

A second biblical metaphor, which reveals the reality of liminality, is that of *wilderness*. Old Testament examples include Moses' forty years tending sheep before the Lord's call to liberate his people from slavery (ex 3); the Israelites' flight from Egypt into the wilderness before final arrival in the promised land (ex 12:31–19:25); and David's sojourn in the deserts of Ziph, Maon, and En Gedi (1 Sam 23–24) to escape Saul before finally having his kingship ratified. The New Testament is also replete with examples of *wilderness*. John the Baptist's entire adult ministry was spent in the *wilderness* near the Jordan (Matt 3); Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert after his baptism, where he was confronted and tempted by the enemy (Matt 4:1–11); and Paul disappeared into Arabia for three years following his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal 1:15–18).

It is important to understand the work of God during *wilderness*. In the account of the Israelites and their journey through *wilderness*, two prominent themes emerge. The first relates to the sense of needing to leave behind the comforts and yet slavery of Egypt for the discomfort, yet freedom of being led by Yahweh. Time and again, the Israelite nation when faced by difficulties or hardship, cried out for the certainty of Egypt (eg Num 11:4–6), only to be reminded by God of their need to trust in him. Secondly, it was in the *wilderness* that the people of Israel were given the opportunity to experience the power and presence of God first-hand, as illustrated through his continual presence by fire and by cloud (Num 14:14).

Similarly, when Jesus was called by the Spirit into the *wilderness* following his baptism, he was confronted with the enemy's temptation to abandon his trust in the Father. Nouwen (1989, pp. 15, 35, 55) believes that Jesus' three temptations represent the three great potential vulnerabilities of those who would truly follow

God: the need to be relevant; the need to be significant; and the need to be powerful.

Significantly, as God was present with the Israelites in Sinai (Ex 40:36-38), so too was Jesus comforted by the Father's angels during his forty days and nights of dislocation (Mk 1:9-11). Thus it was in the *wilderness* that both the people of Israel and Jesus faced a time when physical comfort and familiarity were suspended and the need and opportunity to more deeply trust God to meet all needs for security and provision was heightened.

Dumm (1987, p. 58-59) believes that this suspension of the familiar and the paradoxical companionship of God in new and unforeseen ways is a central facet of the invitation to *journey through wilderness*. He believes that it is inevitable that one who accepts this invitation must leave the familiar and known to experience a time of transition characterised by uncertainty and unfamiliarity. The purpose of such a time therefore is to give the spiritual pilgrim the opportunity to have previous patterns of attitude and action deconstructed and disempowered so that one can more truly come to find the Lord as the true and ultimate source of security and life.

In Anne's story, the metaphor of *wilderness* seems to be one of the major images that God used to help her make sense of her experience. As she describes so clearly, *the landscape suddenly shifted, as I was thrust into a completely unfamiliar space, which could only be likened to wandering in a wilderness. God's voice could not be heard, scripture was as dust, compassion could not be found...* and yet paradoxically it was in this place of unfamiliarity and discomfort that Anne also knew the Father's love and presence in a new way, *as I sat or walked in silence and solitude, it was as if my whole being experienced new levels of knowing, seeing, being and belonging.*

The third and final biblical metaphor, which speaks of liminality, is that of *exile* or the experience of being forced to leave home and country and take up residence in a foreign land. In the Old Testament *exile* was experienced when the Israelite nation lived in captivity in Egypt (Ex 1), and when the northern (2 Kings 17:23) and southern kingdoms (2 Chron 36:20) were forcibly removed



from their lands by their captors. Although *exile* can be the result of disobedience, this is not always necessarily so. In the New Testament, Jesus' own family was forced to flee from Herod and spent several years in *exile* in Egypt (Matt 2:13-18) and John was forced to live out the remainder of his life on the isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9).

The experience of *exile* is perhaps best described in Hebrew's famous description of those who died in faith waiting for the Lord's promise to be fulfilled,

*... and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their god; for he has prepared a city for them* (Heb 11:13b-16 NASB).

Herein lies the true experience and purpose of *exile*. One becomes a *stranger in a strange land*, who no longer primarily belongs to one's culture or homeland. This experience may be an actual physical *exile* or an inner sense of dislocation. *Exile* is seen in Anne's experience where, although she physically remained within her community, she felt as if she was on the outside looking in. Goonan (1996, p. 35-37) argues that the *spirituality of exile* involves two great tasks for the pilgrim. First, is the principle of adaptability – the commitment to accept and learn to live in integrity in the place that is not home. The second involves discovering the potential to transcend previously, self-defined limits through finding home in God and not primarily in one's own culture, family or community. The outcome is the ability to traverse freely, many different expressions of identity, culture and community, without nostalgically longing for the familiar. As Stein (n/d, p. 11) writes, *nostalgia disappears when one's true homeland is reached*.

Clearly, each biblical metaphor describing the experience of *liminality* captures and symbolises different aspects of being *betwixt and between*. The symbol of *tomb* speaks of grief and pain that is often involved with dying to old forms of identity and

significance. Journeying through *wilderness* offers the idea of finding God in new ways in the emptiness and dryness that is present after leaving the old, before the new is reached. Living in *exile* carries with it the sense that one's primary ego is not sourced singularly from identification with one's own culture, family and community.

Although each metaphor encapsulates different aspects of the transformational experience, they all point to a common reality. This involves the need to let go of, leave behind or even be forcibly expelled from old ascendant forms of self-definition and identity so that God can be found in ways never before experienced. It is thus in the place of *liminality*, when stripped of all structures of support and security, that the pilgrim and the Father are free to encounter each other in new and life changing ways.

### ***Companionship Those in Liminality***

The question begs to be asked, *how does one walk with someone who is experiencing the dislocation of liminality?* At times, there can be a temptation to act as a Job's comforter declaring judgement or prescribing pseudo-spiritual solutions to profound desolation. Such an approach may arise from fear or even from an inner self-righteousness. Fear unconsciously propels one towards *fixing what is wrong* rather than genuinely coming beside and *holding the other's mystery*. Fear's impetus may come from the avoidance of confronting one's own unacknowledged drive towards ascendancy. Self-righteousness is often but the reverse image of fear. It also unconsciously can drive one towards forcibly confronting the journeyer, which in reality may only be a defensive stance to protect one's own false constructs of self.

Nouwen (1979, p. 87 - 88) with his concept of the *wounded healer* would suggest that the way of Christ is far more challenging and personally confronting than fear-driven or self-righteous responses. What the journeyer in *liminality* most needs is for companions on the way to hold normalcy for them. There were two types of companions in Anne's story: those who *responded as if all was normal* and those, who having experienced the fracture of *liminality* for themselves, *gently and appropriately brought solace through*

*bearing witness to the constancy of God's love by listening and trying to make meaning of liminal reality.* Both were gift to her. Herein lies the key to true companionship in *liminality*. stay with the person. Don't withdraw. Do not be afraid, for the constancy of another's presence may powerfully mediate the deeper reality of God's faithful presence in the midst of his apparent hiddenness.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the reality of God's transforming grace in the inbetween place is that, while *liminality* is potentially frightening, if one traverses its landscape and gently holds to the real, it brings incredible freedom, peace and relief. For the journeyer, it is possible to plumb depths of God's grace that were never previously conceived and to receive the gift, as Francis of Assisi did, of being able to experience an *inner life where all shadow, mystery and paradox is confronted, accepted and forgiven* (Rohr, 2001, p. 4).

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# Living in the Spirit

The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life

Geoff Waugh



*Living in the Spirit*  
The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life

## ***4 Primordial events in theology and science support a life/death ethic***

**Martin J. Rice**



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### **Summary: Primordial events in both theology and science support a basic life/death ethic**

Several remarkable coincidences between some primordial events described in the Bible and, independently uncovered through the programmes of modern science, facilitate the derivation of basic, binary ethical principles. Such broadly-based principles are potentially widely influential, by virtue of their primordial and grand, contextualizing character. Whilst the time-scales of these events are always likely to be contentious, the biblical and scientific events themselves are strikingly similar, and generally not contentious. Although it could be argued that the coincidences are artificial, the Bible

having influenced the scientists' interpretation of their data, an even stronger argument can be made for independence of the two data-sets. Such coincidences, therefore, suggest nature itself (for example the night sky, the reef, and the rainforest) advertises a grand context; a life/death context, that conditions all ethics. Common principles, derived from the science and the theology of primordial events, clearly modulate the viewpoint that ethics are an entirely culturally-determined, social construct. They also add an ethically instructive note to our enjoyment of the harmony of our spectacular environment.

This hybrid paper, is offered with something of the attitudes of Arthur Peacocke (1996, p.94), who writes, "But to pray and to worship and to act we need supportable and believable models and images of the One to whom prayer, worship and action are to be directed."; and of Hugh Ross (1999, p.47), who says, "Rather than elevating human beings and demoting God, scientific discoveries do just the opposite. Reality allows less room than ever for glorifying humans and more and than ever for glorifying God."

### **Introduction: evangelism goes out and meets people where they reside (Acts 1:8).**

Scientifically trained people sometimes ask challenging questions of the Christian faith. For example, among believers it is not usual to ask, "**Why** did God create a universe having the observable characteristics of our one? Or, "What is **the connection** between the invisible God and our visible space/time reality?" Or, "How does eternal Life compare with earthly life?" If asked, they are usually answered with general truths, like, "It is to give God glory", or, "Because God is a loving, creator God", or, "Because God's Word says so and I believe it". However, most contemporary thinkers seek more technically specific answers. Failing that, they are likely to turn off from hearing the Gospel. In addition, ethical relativism thrives in situations where a connection between God and human society is perceived as distant, tenuous, or imaginary. Such negative outcomes make it pertinent for theologians, students of the Bible, ethicists, and evangelists to be aware of the actual



questions being asked, and to work at addressing specific issues, in terms of appositely contextualized biblical revelation (see Carson, 2000). Jesus guaranties the power of the Holy Spirit for those who will witness to the Gospel in diverse situations (Acts 1:8); however, it is not reasonable to expect God's Spirit to over-ride sound logic and reason, since these come from the same Spirit (e.g. 1 Kings 4:29; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 1:17; 4:23; Hebrews 8:10; 1 Peter 1:12,13). As Mark Ramsey, a well-known preacher, puts it, "The Bible says you are transformed by the renewing of your mind, not by the removal of your mind!". This means transformed cerebration but also standing out, **being** different, being a loving community of 'resident aliens' in an over-individualised world (see Carson, 1996, p.478).

The substantial contributions of intellectuals who submitted to God, such as Isaiah, Saul of Tarsus, Luke the physician, Augustine of Hippo, Hildegard of Bingen, etc., demonstrates that evangelizing thinkers could be worth while. Great minds are created by God to do great good but, without Christ, they may do great harm. Evangelising intellectuals is a priority: what the University thinks today, Society will enact tomorrow! Might our society be reaping a bitter harvest from its earlier neglect of sowing well- reasoned seed, and its failure to cultivate the fields of academia with the Gospel? Empowered by the Holy Spirit of God, academics who are Blood-washed, born-again, and Bible-believing, should be able to produce wiser and more powerful intellectual advances. Did Jesus ever say to steer clear of academe and the intellectual knowledge enterprise? Matthew 13:52 would suggest otherwise; here the learned of God's Kingdom are told to become wise in applying both ancient and contemporary knowledge. Matthew 6:33 emphasises, that for those who are submitted to God's rule, everything else follows. Pearcey and Thaxton (1994), and Murphy (2003), provide excellent philosophical underpinning for the harmonizing of science and theology.

Thoroughly intellectual Christians are capable of the best. J. Rodman Williams (1996) has set a bench-mark in producing, *Renewal Theology - Systematic Theology from a Charismatic*

*Perspective.* C. Peter Wagner is another author from the pentecostal stream, who writes at a high academic level. In addition, there are many from the evangelical stream (most famously C. S. Lewis) able to reach the intellectuals, including thinkers like Francis Schaeffer, Ravi Zacharias, Os Guinness, Nancy Pearcey, D. A. Carson, Gordon D. Fee, and many others. In Australia, Kirsten Birkett, author of *Unnatural Enemies – an introduction to science and Christianity* (1997), edits *Kategoria*, an excellent, Christian, critical review, published by Matthias Media, Kingsford, NSW. A new frontline, research journal has appeared called *Theology and Science* (Volume 1, Number 1, April 2003, sponsored by The Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences, Berkeley). Whilst some of the papers in this journal and its progenitor (*CTNS Bulletin*) may be insufficiently founded on Holy Scripture for many believers, they do at least address controversial issues in the theology, science, philosophy, and society interface, and thus invade the academic strongholds of atheism, with ideas of God. With the confidence of God's judgment against worldly wisdom (1 Corinthians 3:18-20), the academy of pentecostal thinkers is surely even more mandated to invade every domain of thought with the light, life, logic, and love of Jesus Christ (e.g. Colossians 2:2-4).

### **To the ends of the Earth: a scientific world-view**

Much that is written in science and technology has powerful theological overtones (usually without the conscious knowledge of its authors!) and often has implications for human culture and ethics. In 1959, C.P Snow's *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* appealed for greater acknowledgement of the relationship between the arts, government, and science. Snow would have been amazed how drastically things had changed, 40 years on, when Willimon (1999) wrote, "It has been one of the great postmodernist discoveries that almost everything is opinion. Almost everything is value laden. We have no way of talking about things except through words, and words, be they the words of science or the words of art, are more conflicted than they may first appear, more narrative dependent, story based. Science is as 'religious' as religion." Historian, Thomas Kuhn's *The*

*Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), alerted scientists to the tremendous influence their imagination has in directing the path of science.

Philosophers of science (such as A.F. Chalmers, in the 1999 edition of his, *What is this thing called Science*) are now thoroughly cognizant with the apparent impossibility of finding a truly objective foundation for the scientific endeavour. That is not to say that science isn't largely objective; after all, no one has to think twice before getting into a motor vehicle or using a computer. It does mean, however, that any opinions that science expresses on **why** its products work, or **what** the larger context is, are fraught with contradictions. Science on its own is able to tell us **how** things work (within limits), but it is unable to say why they work, nor what the overall grand story is. The "why" question is intimately linked to questions about the origin and destiny of all things, and it is here that science becomes inarticulate. In fact, as this paper moves to demonstrate, science needs Christian revelation to support its major world-view, and to complete its contextual integrity. Science and Christianity are great partners but awful opponents. The common view that they are separate and irreconcilable ways of knowing [or NOMA, non-overlapping magisteria {cf. the late Stephen J. Gould's *Rocks of Ages* (1999)}], should never be acceptable to a Christian. In contrast, Richard H. Bube (1995) has derived a taxonomy of the variety of possible productive relationships between the Christian faith and science. Carlson (2000), provides a thorough debate of this issue. In this paper there is no attempt to dictate from parts of Holy Scripture as to what scientists must believe.

Creation Scientists have fully occupied that area, loyally and creatively defending the Word of God, and producing a library of literature and multi-media

(e.g. see web sites: <http://www.icr.org>;  
<http://www.ChristianAnswers.Net>;  
<http://www.answersingenesis.org>; etc.).

Whereas, much of Creation Science can be seen as a form of apologetic defense and of confrontational rhetoric {e.g. *In Six*

*Days – Why Fifty Scientists Choose to Believe in Creation*, edited by John F. Ashton (2001)}, the approach outlined in this paper is frankly evangelical, and essays to be eirenically logical. This, different type of approach, does not overtly contradict but reaches out to encounter science where it is, and enlivens and elevates it through biblical insights, built around a philosophy that could be called ‘Invasion Theology’. At no stage does invasion theology attempt to prove science wrong by quoting scripture, but neither does it compromise God’s Word by syncretising it with un-Christian views of the meaning of scientific discoveries. The vision is to meet an enquirer on their own scientific territory and, right there, to demonstrate that God’s Word stretches into science, and that the living Word is able to lead scientists intellectually and personally into the arms of Christ. The apostle Paul was comfortable to be a Jew with Jews, a Gentile with Gentiles, and weak with the weak. Paul teaches Christians to focus on winning as many souls for Christ as possible, by any fair means that work (1 Corinthians 9:20-22). He also warns Titus to avoid futile arguments (Titus 3:9). In the same ethos, invasion theology consciously evades religiosity. For a variety other points of approaches to the Genesis issue, see Hagopian (2001).

The most profound place of encounter between science and Christianity is at the primordial events that generated the observable universe we live in. To find out ‘how science thinks’ is not problematic; a web subscription to the weekly, world-leading science journal, *Nature*, is sufficient to provide clear information on the latest discoveries and developing theories. Science is renowned for the instability of its theories of origins, but most of the time in recent years it has considered our universe of space/time to have originated from nothing, by means of a ‘Big Bang’. In big bang theory, a non-space/time ‘singularity’ becomes (against all statistical probability) unstable, and generates the commencement of our universe, in the form of a gigantic bubble of expanding space, light, heat energy, and time. The energy then produces matter: subatomic entities such as quarks, that eventually cooperate to form the simplest of all chemical species, hydrogen atoms. Billions of tons of hydrogen become attracted together by gravity and

eventually form stars. Stars are hydrogen-consuming, thermonuclear, fusion reactors, generating heat and light on a grand scale. Stars also manufacture the lower atomic weight elements, and, when a star eventually ages and explodes as a supernova, it also synthesises the higher atomic weight elements. This generates most of the chemical elements of the Periodic Table and widely scatters them through space, to form inter-stellar dust clouds, which are able to aggregate by gravitational attraction, to form planets, satellites, meteorites, and comets. Some of these may then revolve around a star, to form arrangements, such as we observe in our own planetary system. Science then proposes that (if conditions are right on the surface of a planet) microbial, plant, animal, and even human life may develop. Generations of human societies accumulate knowledge and skills to the point where they invent science and technology, develop radio-telescopes and cyclotrons, and begin speculating about primordial events! This story depends upon **profound cooperation** (including loss of personal identity) among the diverse varieties of cosmic entities. It is the standpoint of this paper that far too much emphasis has been placed on competitive interactions and this now needs to be adjusted to reveal the extent to which our universe depends upon cooperation.

Just as science has originated a detailed narrative to explain the birth of our universe, it also attempts to extrapolate from its data to predict how the universe may die. The earth first, scorched by an expanding red-giant sun; the universe next, as it attains maximum entropy and time ceases. Such a simplistic, atheistic cosmology is deeply unsatisfying to any thinking, feeling human being. In the cosmogenesis of unaided science (which in parts can yet be extraordinarily detailed and well substantiated) everything happens by accident, with no meaning beyond the mechanics of existence and survival; ethics are simply a by-product of an arbitrary requirement for social stability. Science's non-theological universe is thus deadly cold; a place of frustrated hopes; a frantic, meaningless interlude of light, life and pain-wracked consciousness, caught between two periods of unstructured, lifeless, utter darkness. This raw scientific vision mocks at the beauty and meaning of light and

life and love, by chaining it between preceding and succeeding eons of darkness, death, and empty lovelessness. Truly, “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” (Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Act 5, Scene 5). The very rawness of this unadorned scientific worldview cries out for the Christian ministry of wisdom, faith, encouragement and, indeed, for deliverance.

### **The indispensable Word of God: the Bible adds meaning to science’s worldview**

The Biblical story of primordial events is largely found in the early chapters of the book of Genesis. The first part of the first chapter of John’s Gospel is crucial, and there are key verses in the Psalms, Job, Isaiah, Matthew, Romans, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation. The Christian understanding of the origins of our universe can never be separated from Christology, since it pleased God the Father to make his Christ the creator of all that exists, in the spiritual, as well as the material universe; the Christ antedates all things, and entities only obtain their meaning and function from him (Colossians 1:15-19). Polkinghorne (1988, p.69) writes, “One’s instinct to seek a unified view of reality is theologically underwritten by belief in the Creator who is the single ground of all that is.” The challenge for a Christian thinker is to come to such a knowledge of God’s Word, as to be able to provide a bridge from Christ to the lost world of scientism, described at the end of the section above. In order to achieve that, it may be necessary to re-examine cherished beliefs (like the sexual transmission of ‘original sin’) that have come down the centuries from early church fathers, like Augustine. A thoroughly biblical worldview is required, to meet science and the intellectuals at the place where they labour today, not where they loitered many centuries ago (*cf.* Mt 13:52). Paul instructs Timothy to make full use of the holy scriptures (verses that are full of God’s life-giving breath) to teach, train, and equip for good works; and to correct error, and rebuke wrongdoing (2 Timothy 3:16). Inspired by the Lord, the Holy Spirit, this surely must be a life-giving journey into God’s reality, and never a matter of dead religion.

In such a short paper as this, it is not possible to fully develop major theological points, and that work has to be left for another venue. However, to develop the basic argument, summary positions have had to be taken regarding the nature of God, the origin of evil, the sequence of primordial events, the reason for our universe to exist, and the predicted outcome of it all. Much further reading is available, and authors such as Southgate (1999) have developed excellent teaching programmes at the interfaces of science and theology. Multi-disciplinary courses in this area are proliferating and becoming popular in many good universities.

It is not hard to convince many scientifically educated modern or post-modern thinkers that science is inadequate to measure ethical qualities such as: faithfulness, kindness, justice, mercy, humility, righteousness, love, joy, peace, holiness, forgiveness, patience, self control, etc. This then permits the suggestion that there are entities beyond the containment of our space/time universe; a suggestion confirmed by fundamental physics in regard to the mathematical value of constants governing the forces that subtend the material universe. Our universe very clearly has inputs from outside its 'box'. That those inputs are highly tuned to produce circumstances conducive to human existence is also demonstrable. The scientific evidence for design (and hence the Designer) grows stronger every year (e.g. Dembski and Kushiner, 2001). A scientifically-literate enquirer might then be led to consider the possibility that the God of Christians is truly the same person as the unseen designer of our universe, the originator of uniquely human persons; an inspiring, self-giving God of light, reason, life and love.

Regarding the nature of God, the Bible clearly states that he alone is immortal, dwells in unapproachable light, and is impossible for a human being to see (1 Timothy 6:16); that God is love (1 John 4:8), and is spirit (John 4:24); that his invisible qualities can be clearly learned from unbiased examination of the world around us (Romans 1:20); and that everything we need to know about God has been revealed to us by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (e.g. Philippians 2:6; John

6:36; 10:30; 14:9).

Since God, and God's dwelling place, are full of light, life, love, holiness, and perfect order (e.g. 1 John 1:5), the question arises as to where the disorder described in Genesis 1:2 comes from. What is the origin of the pre-existent darkness, formless emptiness, and watery depths (perhaps a hebraism for 'rebellion'). This question is rarely addressed theologically but, in the context of outreaching to those scientists aware of the yawning nullity proposed to precede the Big Bang, it is especially pertinent. Theologically, the answer can hardly be less than that the Genesis 1:2 situation, described by Moses, is evidence for the revolt of Satan and his rebel angels. Jesus said that he saw Satan fall like a bolt of lightning and that could well refer to an incident before the creation of our universe (Luke 10:18). Darkness in scripture is almost always (though not invariably) associated with evil (2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 6,13, etc.). A foundational proposal, here called 'Invasion Theology', is that a pre-existing negation of God's immortal, life-giving love, a rebellion, locked in the deepest darkness, has been laid bare, and exposed in its minutest detail, by the Christ of God. It is proposed that Christ achieved this by invading that dark, chaotic pre-primordial place with our universe of light, life and love. This concept is bolstered by 1 John 3:8, when the verse is taken as a statement regarding the eternal work of the Christ, not just his earthly mission revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. In that sense, when Jesus says, "It is finished" (John 19:30), are there not overtones of his unceasing work, that started with the most primordial of events (Gn 2:2)? Whilst this may be an unusual view to theologians, it functions well as a bridge between the understanding of primordial events proposed by science and that revealed in the Bible. Invasion theology makes it almost inevitable that there would be a deceitful, death-dealing serpent loose in God's Garden, at the 'start' (Genesis 3:1-4)! Invasion theology would view Adam, Eve and their children as delegates of God, mandated to extend the invasion throughout the earth, revealing and destroying the various levels of the principdom of darkness. As God's people, Israel inherited the same sacred task, and Christ's church is commissioned for



similar work today.

Finally, Jesus Christ appeared in the flesh and, by his life and teaching, comprehensively demonstrated the victory of life over death. The invasion was complete, empowered and now to be extended to every creature. The resurrection of Christ is, in that sense, the most important event of cosmic history. The Resurrection guaranties his words regarding the forgiveness of sin, his prophesies about end-time events and the regeneration of all things. These are processes and events beyond the direct reach of science, though the evidence for Christ's resurrection is objectively excellent (Stroebel, 1998).

### **Consequences of an invasion theology worldview: a basic binary ethical overview**

A crucial point in any scheme of ethics is the definition of GOOD (e.g. Honderich, 1995, p.587). From the invasion theological perspective, 'good' is seen in the invasion of negation. That is, God's activity in creating light, logic, life, and love; bringing into being a whole cosmos of meaning, reason, beauty, and worship. This may provide a way out of the dilemma first formulated in Plato's *Euthyphro*, in that good is good **both** because God commands it and because of what it enacts (Honderich, *op. cit.*). It may be thought that there could be no coincidences here between theology and science, simply on the grounds that whilst 'good' is a proper object of study for ethics and theology, it falls outside the boundaries of science. Surely science is concerned only with the accuracy of data and the productivity (truth) of its hypotheses, theories, and laws? However, upon reflection that judgment might have to be revised. Science simply cannot avoid conceding that those factors that enable it to exist and to operate successfully are essentially 'good'. Science did not exist, nor could it exist, in the pre-existing darkness of negation. Such a darkness and negation are not neutral, they are inimical to, and clearly subvert, the essential foundations of science itself, and so science would not be remiss in referring to them as objectively 'evil'.

Factors such as light, logic, life, and love are essential for the

very existence of science. Without light scientists could not see, without logic (part of wisdom) there would be no rational basis for science, without life there would be no humans to work in science, without love and cooperation our society would be so violent as to afford insufficient opportunity for science. Science must admit that the pre-primordial darkness of negation (revealed in the Bible and independently described by science) is evil and its invasion by light, logic, life, and love is good. The work of establishing order, understanding, and cooperation in our universe is unarguably the basis for the scientific endeavour; any resurgence of chaos and confusion is an anti-scientific force. So at its very heart, science is far from being an ethically-neutral discipline. This truth may come as a shock to most practicing scientists and technologists! Factors that facilitate science are unconsciously accepted as 'good', and those that degrade the scientific process are 'bad'. Working scientists are in the habit of applauding research work as either 'good science' or denigrating it as 'bad science'. To be meaningful and productive, science relies completely upon the immanence of logic and reliability in the universe, upon the integrity and skill of the scientists themselves, on the probity and standards of the community of scientists, and ultimately upon the sustaining interest and/or support of Society.

Peacock (1990, p.129) quotes atheist, Stephen Hawking, "Why does the Universe go to all the bother of existing? Is the Unified Theory so compelling that it brings about its own existence? Or does it need a Creator, and if so, does he have any other effect on the universe?" Peacock (1990 p.132) writes that Hawking, examining the uniformity of the initial state of the Universe, concluded that, so carefully were things chosen that, "it would be very difficult to explain why the Universe should have begun this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us." Peacock (1990, p.143) also writes, 'in a letter of January 1633 . . . Galileo wrote, "Thus the world is the work and the scriptures the word of the same God." Truth itself is one, yet lies make it into a binary system. Peacock (1990, p.88) again, describes Fred Hoyle's attempt to dispense with the idea of a creation moment by introducing a steady-state model, based on 'continuous creation' at the centre of the Universe and

dissipation at the edges; an effort that was criticized by Stanley Jaki as, “the most daring trick ever given a scientific veneer”! Science is full of such binary ethical judgments; and examples range from honest mistakes, through weak thinking, right up to outright fraud and corruption of the scientific process. Scientific truth is subject to the same limitations and degrading influences as any other branch of truth and, indeed, the created universe itself. It, we, and God’s own Spirit all groan over this painful situation (Romans 8:22,23,26). The whole cosmic enterprise is attacked and harassed, being subjected to frustration and decay, living in hope of the emergence of humans who are pleasing to God (Romans 8:21,22). The whole of creation finds fulfillment in the revelation of the true followers of Christ; who are the harvest the universe is scheduled to produce (Romans 8:19). The book of Revelation is primarily concerned with the final exposure and destruction of the rebellious work of the devil, and the identification of the faithful co-workers of Christ. In one sense, the whole cosmic story is summarized in those two events, both of them giving great glory to God.

Independently, Christianity and science have revealed remarkably coincident views of primordial reality: 1. Good is the desirable overall context and precedes evil; 2. Evil is an aberrant subset that separates from good; 3. Good is logical, orderly, consistent and reliable; 4. Evil is unreliable, treacherous and chaotic; 5. Good, by its nature, invades evil; 6. Evil resists and corrupts good; 7. Good does not rest until evil is eliminated.

### **The visible reveals the invisible: binary ethics gazes out at us, wherever we look**

Of all the visually spectacular features of our universe, the greatest must surely be the night sky, viewed from a high place or country area, free from obscuring clouds, air pollution, and light contamination. The awesome beauty and breathtaking wonder of the endlessly diverse, and seemingly countless, stars, and of our Milky Way galaxy, beggar rational description. In our age of science, an observer can be expected to read much

more meaning into that scene than simply its awesome beauty. Primordial negation is the backdrop, a thing of timeless darkness: energy-less, substance-less, lifeless, inhuman, loveless; a murderous place of death, darkness, deception, and hate. But countless beautiful lights burn in that darkness; time extends its merciful reign; planets revolve around suns; life flourishes on planetary surfaces, and it challenges the very teeth of negation; consciousness bursts forth, accompanied by conscience; literature and the arts flourish, and the dear Lord becomes known by name. Is it any wonder that God drove his prophets and his people into the wilderness so often, where the visible sky teaches of the invisible majesty of the Lord? The scientific details of modern cosmology contains many more parables that supports the ideas of invasion theology and of a basic binary ethic.

Australia still has some relic rainforests remaining. They are places of extraordinary biological variety, productivity, and unusual longevity; highly diverse and highly stable ecosystems. Rainforests rarely have any one species in large numbers, instead they seem to be knitted together by levels of multiple mutualism. Cooperation between species is their dominant motif. Rainforests advertise to humanity the advantages of unity and mutual help, as effective means of withstanding the assaults of chaos and destruction.

The Great Barrier Reef is justly one of Australia's most renowned biological resources and arguably the largest living thing on planet Earth. The GBR is about 2,000 km long, occupying an area of about 200,000 square km, where the requirements for clear, unpolluted, shallow, warm, salty, moving water are satisfied. The GBR depends for its existence upon a minute organism - the coral polyp. Without countless trillions of these tiny anthozoans, building their colonies and providing food and shelter to a dazzling array of much larger and more sophisticated animals, there would be no reef. The coral polyps themselves are of about 400 varieties. Their beautiful colours are mostly provided by the symbiotic algae that live within their bodies. The glory of the reef is thus sustained, at its base, by the humble mutual service of two very

different types of simple organism. The life of corals, though simple, provides for a profusion of amazing, and often subtly complex living beings (including delicious species of fish, crustaceans and mollusks!), that would otherwise not exist. The many ethical messages of this scenario need little emphasis.

It is remarkable that though the night sky, rainforests, and the reef are some of the most photographed objects in existence, yet their use as teaching examples for ethics courses would not be so well known. They contain countless spectacular examples of invasion theology and its perennial ethic of the boldness of light, transparency, order, cooperation, and life penetrating and flourishing over the spiteful negation of concealment, darkness, chaos, antipathy, and death.

### **Conclusion:**

It is hoped that this paper's melding of science, theology, ethics and nature provides a useful starting point for thinking about the very foundations of life and death. Certainly the postmodern dilemmas (e.g. "The pursuit of knowledge without knowing who we are or why we exist, combined with a war on our imaginations by the entertainment industry, leaves us at the mercy of power with no morality." Zacharias, 2000, p.23) cries out for an objective reality. Perhaps science and theology, in an uncharacteristic symbiosis, are together becoming strong enough to point convincingly to the Rock of reality.

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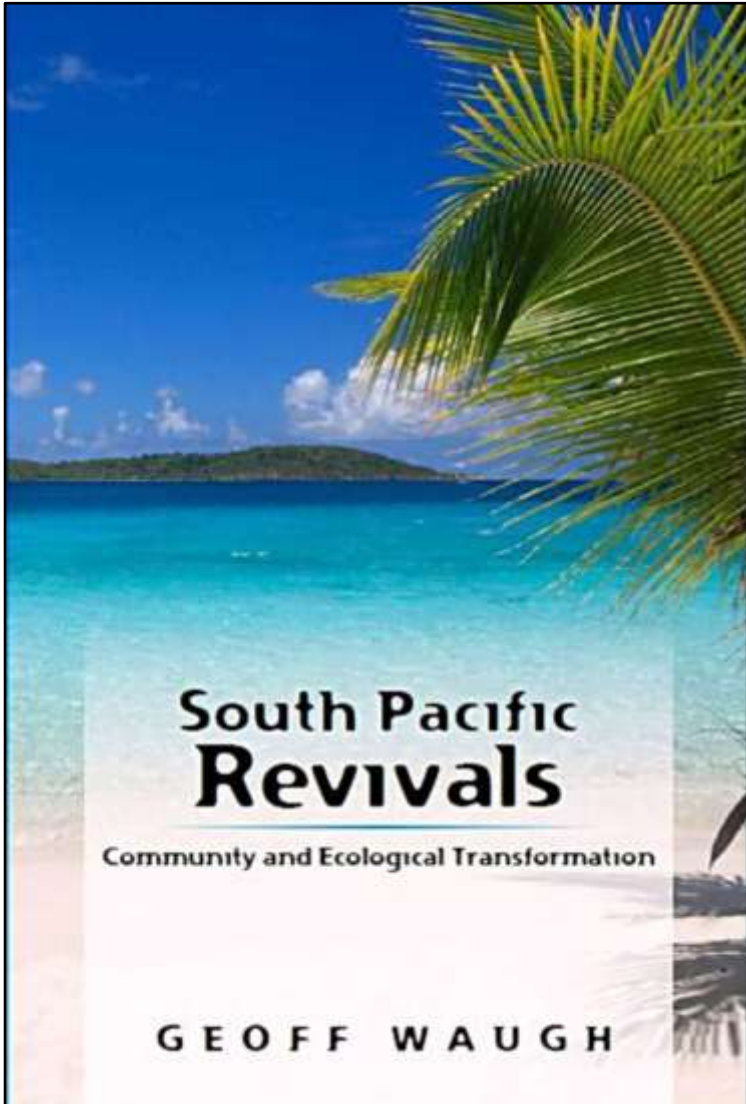
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**Ethical Encounter Theology - An Inter-Disciplinary Consonance.** PhD (2011).

**Précis**

Theology/Science methods, with ethical philosophy and Pentecostal/Charismatic theology, together provide for a tripartite monist Ethical Encounter Theology (EET) worldview. It is argued that a perfect agapaic love encounter with a prolepsis of moral evil evoked our physically-complexifying universe so as to specifically facilitate reifications of ethical ecology. World history is not disposable when right- and wrong-ethical ecollations must be accumulated for eschatological justice. This *creatio ex ethica* cosmogony subtends a robust theodicy, where moral and natural evils are normal, as in evolutionary theory. Personal ethical experiences are interpreted via a dialetheism of authentic and expedient good and evil. A monogenetic dual sequential anthropogenesis is argued to harmonize scientific, biblical and ethical accounts of human origins. This is consonant with high Christology yet accessible for different theist, deist, and possibly atheist ethical thinking. EET is compared with biomoussa, Molinism, panentheism, vale-of-soul-making, inspired naturalism and other worldviews. EET harmonizes creation and salvation theology. It identifies sympathetic resonance, supralapsarianism, idioentheism, and ethical chronometry as real/ideal processes. It provides for an ethical *lingua franca* between biblical perfect being theology and Theology/Science. In the wider, ethics-reality-religion debate, EET may facilitate inter-disciplinary conversations and inter-faith reconciliation.



*South Pacific Revivals*  
**Community and Ecological Transformation**



## *5 Community Transformation*

### **Geoff Waugh**



Dr Geoff Waugh edited Issues 1-20 of the *Renewal Journal*.

*Whole communities transformed by God now witness to his power to heal the land and the people when we repent and unite in obedience to his requirements.*

Fiji now has significant examples of effective community transformation, based on honouring God.

The 2005 documentary report titled *Let the Seas Resound*, produced by the Sentinel Group ([www.sentinel.com](http://www.sentinel.com)), identifies examples of transformed communities in Fiji, **featuring reconciliation and renewed ecosystems**. The President of Fiji, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, and the Prime Minister, Laisenia Qarase, include their personal comments in this video and DVD report, now distributed worldwide.

Essential components of this community transformation include these elements.

**1. Honouring God.** Community leaders acknowledge that God creates and sustains life. They rededicate their land and their people to Him. This approach transcends doctrinal divisions, emphasizing the universal laws of God that apply to all people of all nations.

**2. Honouring people.** Community leaders acknowledge the importance of respecting all people. This results in personal and public reconciliation. It is both compassionate and inclusive, transcending division through mutual respect and unity.

**3. Honouring justice.** Community leaders consult widely with diverse groups to identify and address injustice. Issues are complex, and solutions not simple, but a common commitment to God's justice with mutual respect can open the way for community transformation. God's inclusive justice transcends sectarian divisions and conflict with reconciliation and unity.

Many examples illustrate these global principles. The following brief examples provide powerful case studies of community transformation. Often a crisis, such as escalating crime, ethnic conflict or a political coup, becomes the motivating catalyst for change. For example, community and church leaders may be motivated by the crisis to act. However, communities can be transformed without waiting for a crisis to motivate change.

### **Fiji, South Pacific**

In September 2004, 10, 000 people gathered to worship together in Suva, Fiji, drawn by reconciliation initiatives of both government and church leaders. Only four years previously such unity among government and church leaders was unimaginable. Ethnic tensions flared in the attempted coup of May 2000, when the government was held hostage for 56 days, and violence erupted in the streets of Suva.

The President of Fiji, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, called the churches to unite in repentance and prayer for the nation. At a united rally in 2001, Laisenia Qarase, later elected as Prime Minister, confessed: "Our efforts in building the country will come to nothing if they are not

rooted firmly in the love and fear of God. I ask Him to forgive me for the times I have been neglectful and cold in my relationship with Him. With Your guidance Lord, this sinner will renew himself; will find new purpose in the pursuit of Your will. Lord, I entreat You, again, to forgive me, to save me, to capture my heart and hold my hand. I honour You as the King of Kings.” See DVD *Let the Seas resound* (Sentinel Group)

The Association of Christian Churches in Fiji (ACCF) emerged as one structural response to this desire for reconciliation and unity among Christians and in the community.

As people of Fiji unite in commitment to reconciliation and repentance in various locations, many testify to miraculous changes in their community and in the land.

Three days after the people of Nuku made a united covenant with God, the water in the local stream, which for the previous 42 years had been known as the cause of barrenness and illness, mysteriously became clean and life giving. Then food grew plentifully in the area.

Fish are now caught in abundance around the village of Nataleria, where previously they could catch only a few fish. This change followed united repentance and reconciliation.

Many people of Fiji acknowledge that these changes in reconciliation, unity, and in the eco-systems confirm God’s promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14 – “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.”

### **Almolonga, Guatemala**

The town of Almolonga in Guatemala in South America, typical of many Mayan highland communities, suffered from economic depression, inebriation, and crime. The four gaols were full this town of 19,000. Many criminals had to be transported to gaols in the capital city.

Guatemala City pastor Harold Caballeros reported that, “the town suffered from poverty, violence and ignorance. In the mornings you would encounter many men just lying on the streets, totally drunk from the night before. And of course this drinking brought along other serious problems like domestic violence and poverty. It was a vicious cycle.”

Donato Santiago, the town’s chief of police, said, “People were always fighting. We never had any rest.” Now with crime dramatically diminished and the gaols no longer needed, police chief Santiago, says with a grin, “It’s pretty uneventful around here.”

A few Christian leaders began regularly praying together from 7 pm to midnight in the 1970s. As they continued to pray in unity, increasing numbers of people were being healed and set free from strong demonic powers or witchcraft. Churches began to grow, and the community began to change. Crime and alcoholism decreased.

Within twenty years the four gaols emptied and are now used for community functions. The last of Almolonga’s gaols closed in 1994, and is now a remodeled building called the ‘Hall of Honour’ used for municipal ceremonies and weddings.

The town’s agricultural base was transformed. Their fields have become so fertile they yield three large harvests a year. Previously, the area exported four truckloads of produce a month. Now they are exporting as many as 40 truckloads a day. Farmers buy big Mercedes trucks with cash, and then attach their testimony to the shiny vehicles with huge metallic stickers and mud flaps declaring, ‘The Gift of God,’ ‘God is my Stronghold’ and ‘Go Forward in Faith.’

Some farmers provide work for others by renting out land and developing fields in other towns. They help people get out of debt by providing employment for them.

On Halloween day in 1998, an estimated 12, 000 to 15, 000 people gathered in the market square to worship and honour God in a fiesta of praise. Led by the mayor and many pastors, the people prayed for God to take authority over their lives and their economy.

University researchers from the United States and other countries regularly visit Almolonga to investigate the astounding 1, 000 percent increase in agricultural productivity. Local inhabitants explain that the land is fertilized by prayer and rained upon with God's blessings.

## **Cali, Columbia**

Columbia in South America has been the world's biggest exporter of cocaine, sending between 700 to 1, 000 tons a year to the United States and Europe alone. The Cali cartel controlled up to 70 percent of this trade. It has been called the largest, richest, and most well organized criminal organization in history (George Otis, 2000, "Snapshots of Glory" in *Renewal Journal*, Issue 17).

The drug lords in cartels ruled the city through fear. At times 15 people a day were killed, shot from the black Mercedes cars owned by the cartels. Car bombs exploded regularly. Journalists who denounced the Mafia were killed. Drug money controlled the politicians.

By the early 1990s the cartels controlled every major institution in Cali including banks, business, politicians and police.

The churches were in disarray and ineffective. "In those days," a pastor recalls, "the pastors' association consisted of an old box of files that nobody wanted. Every pastor was working on his own; no one wanted to join together."

A few discouraged but determined pastors began praying together regularly, asking God to intervene. Gradually others joined them.

A small group of pastors planned a combined service in the civic auditorium in May 1995 for a night of prayer and repentance. They expected a few thousand people, but were amazed when 25, 000 attended, nearly half of the city's evangelical population. The crowd remained until 6 o'clock the next morning at this the first of the city's now famous united all-night prayer vigils held four times a year.

Two days after that event in May 1995, the daily newspaper, *El Pais*,

headlined, “No Homicides!” For the first time in anyone’s memory, 24 hours had passed without a single person being killed. Then, during the next four months 900 cartel-linked officers were fired from the metropolitan police force.

By August 1995, the authorities had captured all seven of the targeted cartel leaders. Previously the combined efforts of the Columbian authorities, and the American FBI and CIA had been unable to do that.

In December 1995, a hit man killed Pastor Julio Ruibal, one of the key leaders of the combined pastors’ meetings and the united prayer gatherings. 1, 500 people gathered at his funeral, including many pastors who had not spoken to each other in months. At the end of the memorial service, the pastors said, “Brothers, let us covenant to walk together in unity from this day forward. Let Julio’s blood be the glue that binds us together in the Holy Spirit.”

Now over 200 pastors have signed the covenant that is the backbone of the city’s united prayer vigils. What made the partnership of these leaders so effective are the same things that always bring God’s blessings: clean hearts, right relationships, and united prayer.

As the kingdom of God became more real in Cali, it affected all levels of society including the wealthy and educated. A wealthy businessman and former mayor said, “It is easy to speak to upper-class people about Jesus. They are respectful and interested.” Another successful businessman adds that the gospel is now seen as practical rather than religious.

Churches grow fast. One church that meets in a huge former warehouse holds seven services on a Sunday to accommodate its 35, 000 people. Asked, “What is your secret?” they point to the 24-hour prayer room behind the platform.

A former drug dealer says, “There is a hunger for God everywhere. You can see it on the buses, on the streets and in the cafes. Anywhere you go people are ready to talk.”

Cali police deactivated a large 174-kilo car bomb in November

1996. The newspaper *El Pais* carried the headline: “Thanks to God, It Didn’t Explode.” Many people noted that this happened just 24 hours after 55, 000 Christians held their third *vigilia* – the all night prayer vigil that includes praise, worship, dances and celebration mixed with the prayers and statements from civic and church leaders.

City authorities have given the churches free use of large stadium venues for their united gatherings because of their impact on the whole community, saving the city millions of dollars through reduced crime and terrorism.

### **Teen Challenge, America**

Illicit drug abuse and addiction create social and personal devastation internationally. Federal dollars in USA allocated for drug treatment climbed from \$120 million in 1969, to \$1.1 billion in 1974, to \$3 billion in 1996, even though the number of illicit drug users by 1998 was half the number of the same group in 1979. However in spite of massive government spending on drug rehabilitation, concern remains about the low cure rate of programs funded by public dollars.

Research published in 1999 included comprehensive statistical analysis comparing drug rehabilitation success rates for Teen Challenge (130 centres and 2885 beds) with public funded and insurers’ funded programs, particularly the popular Short-Term Inpatient (STI) drug treatment programs of one to two months. The study surveyed key areas of rehabilitation including freedom from addictive substances, employment rates, productive social relationships and better quality of life.

Evaluation of the Teen Challenge program conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) in 1975 found that 87% of former abusers were abstaining from Marijuana seven years after completing the program, and 95% of former heroin abusers were abstaining from abuse seven years later. Similarly, the 1999 research found that 86% of former abusers were abstaining from drugs after their Teen Challenge rehabilitation. No public funded

program showed such success rates. Most research showed that less than 10% still abstained from drug abuse five years after treatment.

Research identified the following factors as the most positive, helpful and effective dimensions of the Teen Challenge rehabilitation program, in this order of importance:

1. Jesus Christ or God (the NIDA report called this the “Jesus factor”).
2. Schooling, teaching or the Bible
3. Advisor, staff, love, encouragement.
4. Fellowship, unity, friends, living with others.
5. Discipline, structure, work.

Graduates of the program identified other helpful factors as seeing lives changes, self-motivation, prayer, outings, helping others, forgiving self, changed thinking, hope and good food.

A powerful dimension of the Teen Challenge program, particularly relevant to this article on community transformation, is the significance of the inter-cultural, inter-faith and inter-racial communities in Teen Challenge. These communities transcend racial barriers, such as noted in these comments: “I loved to be around these people from different places, I wished I could have got their numbers; it was a beautiful thing, living with them with no prejudice or racism. We loved one another. It was a beautiful thing. We all learn something from each other; I still learn from them today.”

Information for this section on Teen Challenge is from the article “Teen Challenge’s Proven Answer to the Drug Problem” in a review of a study by Dr A T Bicknese titled “The Teen Challenge Drug Treatment Program in Comparative Perspective”

These brief sample case studies of community transformation provide hope for change and a way ahead. It is possible. It is happening.

The conclusion may be stated in words from the timeless biblical record, spanning many millennia and diverse national and cultural communities:



*Then that honour me, I will honour (I Samuel 2:30).*

*If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked way, then I will hear from heaven my dwelling place, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).*

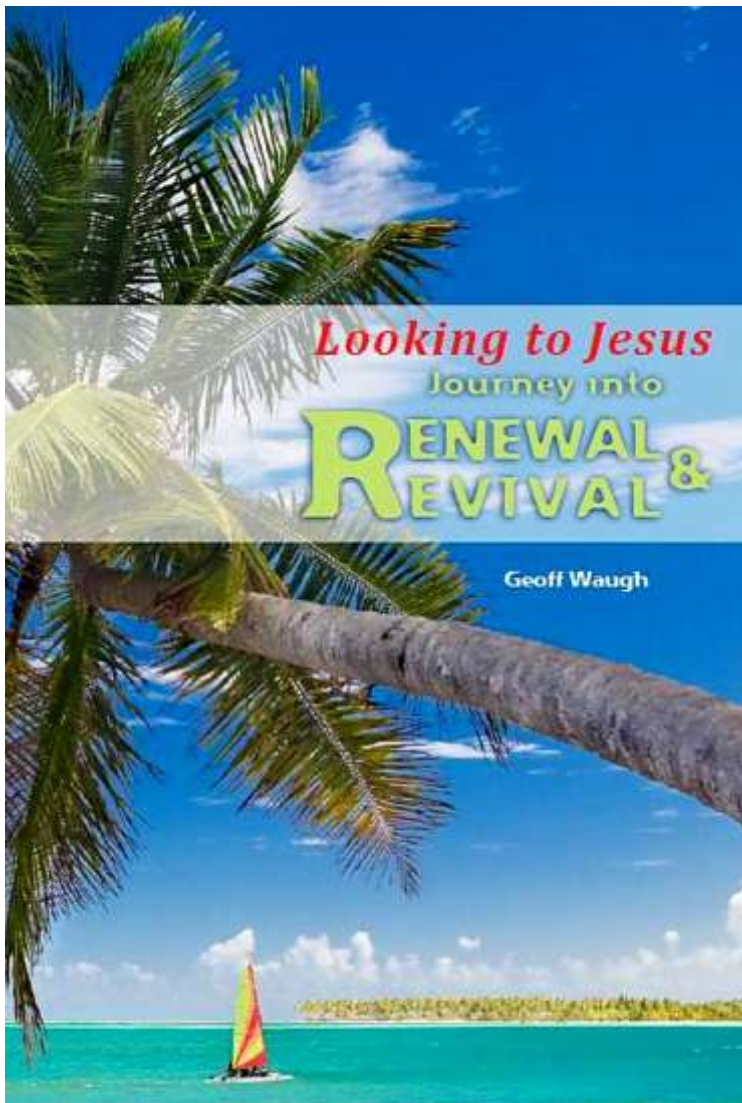
*What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (Hosea 6:8).*

*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you (Mathew 6:33).*

### **Discussion Questions**

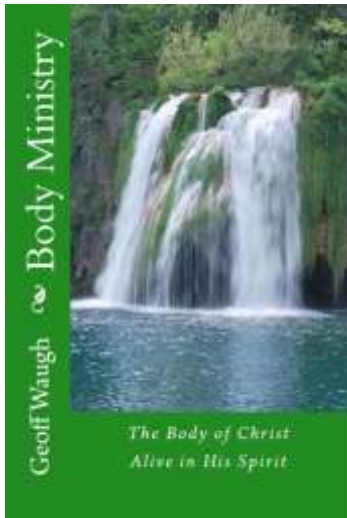
1. What important problems face your community?
2. What are some causes of division in your community?
3. What steps can you take to heal these divisions?
4. What can you identify as long-term solutions for your community?

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***Looking to Jesus***  
**Journey into Renewal and Revival**

## ***Book Reviews***



***Body Ministry: The Body of Christ  
Alive in His Spirit***

**by Geoff Waugh (2011)**

***Popular, updated version of his  
Doctor of Missiology research from  
Fuller Seminary, including amazing  
reports of transforming revivals  
around the world***

### ***Book Structure***

#### ***Part 1: Body Ministry***

##### ***I. Body Ministry***

- 1. Kingdom Authority** with
- 2. Obedient Mission** with
- 3. Mutual Ministry** with
- 4. Spiritual Gifts** with
- 5. Body Evangelism** with

##### ***II. Body Organization***

- 6. Divine Headship**
- 7. Body Membership**
- 8. Servant Leadership**
- 9. Body Life**
- 10. Expanding Networks**

***Part 2: Ministry Education***

- 11. Open Education: From narrow to wide**
- 12. Unlimited Education: From centralized to de-centralized**
- 13. Continuing Education: From classrooms to life**
- 14. Adult Education: From pedagogy to self-directed learning**
- 15. Mutual Education: From competition to co-operation**
- 16. Theological Education: From closed to open**
- 17. Contextual Education: From general to specific**
- 18. Ministry Education: From pre-service to in-service**

**Endorsements:**

**From the Foreword by Rev Prof Dr James Haire, former Principal of Trinity Theological College, Brisbane, and President of the Uniting Church in Australia:**

The church needs to be analysed in order to prepare itself for mission in the changing situations of societies around the world. However, these always must remain secondary. Its primary self-understanding is that the church, the expression of Christianity in the world, is the object of God's self-giving love and grace for the sake of the world.

In this very helpful and timely book, the Rev Dr Geoff Waugh takes up the implications of these issues and applies them to ministry within and beyond the church, the Body of Christ. As the framework above indicates, Dr Waugh's analysis, evaluation and application of the theology of the living Body of Christ inevitably is no less than truly revolutionary, as is his analysis, evaluation and application of the theology of the living Spirit's work.

Dr Waugh has had a long and distinguished mission career, especially in education, in addressing the central Christian issues outlined above. It has been my honour and my privilege to have served alongside him for eight years (1987–1994) in Trinity Theological College, in the Brisbane College of Theology, and in the School of Theology of Griffith University, in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. He has been a dear and valued friend, and especially one who day-by-day in his life has lived out what he taught. Moreover, he has had vast experience in his long teaching ministry, not only in

Australia, but throughout the South Pacific, Asia, and in Africa.

His work is thus very important reading indeed for us all.

**From Rev Dr Colin Warren (former Principal of Alcorn College, Brisbane):**

I acknowledge that Geoff has had a very big impact on my life, both by the witness of his own life and by the quality of his teaching. I pray that you and your church will be greatly blessed as you read and put into practice these basic biblical principles to reach and bless the people who are searching for the living Christ but often do not know what it is they are searching for.

Geoff and I have worked with students and on mission enterprises together over many years. His writing has come from years of practical experience and a vast amount of prayerful study. He has pioneered a work the results of which only eternity will reveal. He has never sought recognition for his tireless and faithful service in honouring the Lord, in continuing to teach and to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. He writes out of varied experiences.

He was the inaugural Principal of the Baptist Bible College in Papua New Guinea (1965-1970). He has taught at Alcorn College and Trinity Theological College (1977-1994) and at Christian Heritage College School of Ministries (from 1995). He is the author of fourteen books, mostly in Christian Education with the Uniting Church, but also on Renewal and Revival. "Geoff Waugh" on amazon.com lists some of these books.

It is important to note that in this important work, Geoff explores the ministry of the whole body of Christ when Holy Spirit gifts are recognised and are encouraged to be exercised. Then the artificial division between clergy and laity or pastor and non-pastor is removed. At the same time there is the recognition of Holy Spirit endowed leadership gifting such as that between Paul and Timothy. This means that Kingdom authority is expressed through Divine headship. His emphasis on body ministry thus becomes a

reality.

Geoff illustrates this clearly with his Case study Number 2 on page 34. There the church no longer consists of passive pew sitters but participants in fulfilling the command of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach repentance, heal the sick and cast out demon spirits, having the certain knowledge that He is with them as He promised “to the end of the age”.

Geoff points out that if the church is to live and grow in today’s world, it must recognise the need to emphasize relationships and adapt to change. This change will include such simple things as the way men and women both old and young dress, and allow others the freedom to dress differently as they attend places of worship in a non judgmental atmosphere.

There is, too, the need to realise the reality that many are affected by a global sense of fear of nuclear destruction and of accelerated and constant change and uncertainty. The church can provide an atmosphere of security through rediscovering the unchanging gospel in a changing world.

Denominations that once were able to be exclusive and hold their numbers in rigid theological disciplines, have been invaded via cassettes, CD’s, DVD’s, and the internet that have widened the thinking horizons of their often theologically bound members, resulting in communication at spiritual levels not possible previously.

Geoff points out that if we are going to fulfil the Great Commission, we must first live the life of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is only then that we can do the work of fulfilling Christ’s command to go.

I commend *Body Ministry* for you to read. All Christians will benefit greatly from reading this insightful book.

***From Rev Dr Lewis Born, former Moderator of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia and Director of the Department of Christian Education.***

Body Ministry and Open Ministry Education come in its right time for adult education, gospel communication, and the growth of the church.

Open Education promises to become the most commonly used adult educational methodology of the new millennium. The demand is likely to increase. This indicates that the work of Geoff Waugh is a significant contribution to the current educational enterprise. It is particularly valuable to Christian Educators. The author's orientation is theological and his target audience is the faith community, its nurture, growth and outreach.

To this point in time the educative process has been inhibited by dependence on structured courses, the classroom and qualified teachers. Accelerated technology, as Mr Waugh observes, has made modern resources commonly available to individuals, churches and schools in every village community. By this medium Open Education for the first time in history is able to offer high quality education from the world's best teachers to people in their own lounge, church or local group meeting place.

All this coinciding with the renewal movement has stimulated interest in theological learning to an unprecedented degree in the history of Christendom. The incredible numerical religious revival in the illiterate Asian and Latin church has been stimulated and served by modern technology.

This gives Open Ministry Education and therefore Mr Waugh's work a global relevance, which he has applied in the Australian context.

As a fellow Australian I am appreciative. My appreciation is greatly enhanced by a deep respect and affection for the author. He is a competent teacher, an excellent communicator, an informed, disciplined renewalist and an experienced extension educator.

All these qualities combine to commend the author and his work.

**Sample from the book:**

***Case study 1: traditional ministry***

Peter was deeply committed to his calling to the ministry, ably supported by his wife, Petrina. His many talents found full expression in his ministry: preaching, teaching (including school Religious Education), counselling, visiting, chairing committees, leading meetings, representing the church on denominational boards and in civic functions, administering church activities, interviewing people for baptisms, church membership and weddings, conducting weddings and funerals, and fitting in a bit of study when he could as well as attending seminars for church leaders.

The phone rang constantly, especially at breakfast or dinner when people hoped they could catch him before he was off again. He wished he had more time for his family, and knew that the strain was showing in family relationships and in his own reaction to stress, inevitable with the constant demands of the ministry. He wished he could find time for waiting on God and quiet reflection as well as study, but there was so much to do. His work was less than his best, because he had so little time to pray, wait in God, and prepare well, and because the constant demand of meeting people's needs saps energy and consumes time.

***Case study 2: body ministry.***

Paul and Pauline were both deeply committed to their ministry. They recognized that they had different gifts and calling within that ministry. They also believed strongly in the need for all Christians to minister in the power of the Spirit. They prayed regularly with people about this and saw their prayers answered. The members of their church asked for, expected, and used spiritual gifts. Church members prayed together for one another and for others. Most of the pastoral care and outreach happened in the home groups. Paul met with home group leaders one night each week, and enjoyed that. Mary met regularly with the leaders of women's day time groups, social caring groups and the music team in the church.



Paul usually preached once on Sundays, and the home groups, study groups and youth groups used the summary of the message. He encouraged gifted preachers in the church who also preached. Church members did most of the teaching (including all the school work) and those gifted with administration organized it all, usually part time with one specific area of responsibility they had chosen and loved to do. A small caring group organized volunteers to visit all the sick people. A keen task group made sure all visitors were contacted by phone or a personal visit during the week after they came to a service. The elders insisted that one day each week was family day for the pastor and his family so they encouraged them to spend time away to wait on God and bring their vision and the Lord's leading clearly in their ministry.

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**From pages 16-19**

### ***Accelerating social change***

Alvin Toffler wrote about the Third Wave in sociology. He could not find a word adequate enough to encompass this current wave we live in, rejecting his own earlier term 'super-industrial' as too narrow. He described civilisation in three waves: a First Wave agricultural phase, a Second Wave industrial phase, and a Third Wave phase now begun.

He noted that we are the final generation of an old civilisation and the first generation of a new one. We live between the dying Second Wave civilisation and the emerging Third Wave civilisation that is thundering in to take its place.

Think of church life during those three sociological waves. Church life changed through the agricultural, then industrial, and now the technological 'third wave'.

**1. Churches for most of 2000 years of the *First Wave agricultural phase*** were the village church with the village priest (taught in a monastery) teaching the Bible to mostly illiterate people, using Latin (and Greek and Hebrew) parchments copied by

hand for 1500 years. Worship involved chants without books or music. These churches reflected rural life, with feudal lords and peasants.

**2. Churches in 500 years of the *Second Wave industrial phase*** (co-existing with the First Wave) became denominational with many different churches in the towns as new denominations emerged. Generations of families belonged there all their life and read the printed Authorised (1511) version of the Bible. They have been taught by ministers trained in denominational theological colleges. Worship has involved organs used with hymns and hymn books. These churches reflected industrial town life, with bureaucracies such as denominations.

**3. Churches in 50 years of the *Third Wave technological phase*** (co-existing with the Second Wave industrial phase in towns and cities and the First Wave agricultural phase in villages and developing nations) are becoming networks of churches and movements, among which people move freely. They tend to be led by charismatic, anointed, gifted, apostolic servant-leaders, usually trained on the job through local mentoring often using part time courses in distance education. Their people have a wide range of Bible translations and use Bible tools in print, on CDs and on the internet. Worship involves ministry teams using instruments with data projection for songs and choruses. These churches reflect third wave technological city life.

Many churches, of course, live in the swirling mix of these phases, especially now with the Second Wave receding and the Third Wave swelling. For example, some denominational churches, especially those involved in renewal, may have a gifted 'lay' senior pastor not trained in a theological college or seminary. Some denominational churches function like independent churches in their leadership and worship styles. Some new independent churches have theologically trained pastors with doctoral degrees in ministry.

These changes have become increasingly obvious in the last 50 years. Many of us became involved in renewal and revival ministries both in denominational churches and in independent networks and movements.

I give many examples of those developments in my autobiographical reflections, *Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal and Revival* (2009), and in my accounts of revivals in *Flashpoints of Revival* (2009) and *South Pacific Revivals* (2010).

These books on renewal and revival are one small example of rapid change. They describe the swirling changes renewal and revival bring as they recapture New Testament Christianity in our day and 21<sup>st</sup> century context.

Even more! Telling the story has changed. You can read about it right now on a Google search and on many web pages such as **[www.renewaljournal.com](http://www.renewaljournal.com)**.

Furthermore, this book is updated regularly also – for free with Amazon’s Print on Demand (POD). Check out the “Look inside” feature in a year’s time and you may see more changes. No longer do we need to spend thousands of dollars to stock pile resources, when we can freely update and adapt them.

We live and minister in this revolutionary ‘post-modern’ era, full of freeing possibilities and challenges.

Subsistence villagers still think and act in a **First Wave** mode, rural townspeople tend to think and act in a Second Wave mode, and urban people in megacities usually think and act in a Third Wave mode.

The norms of the **Second Wave** Industrial Society still influence us all strongly. We are familiar with the organizational society of the town and its bureaucracies, especially the religious and educational ones. We organized the church around denominational bureaucracies.

However, the **Third Wave** megatrend swirling around us now involves adapting to different and smaller social groupings, more transient and diverse than ever before. Denominations continue to exist, of course, but now mix with many flexible, changing structures, such as networks of small groups or house churches and national or global networks for prayer and mobilising action

together through websites and emails.

We have a mixture of both Second Wave people and Third Wave people in local churches. Second Wave people tend to emphasize institutional roles and responsibilities. Third Wave people tend to emphasize relationships and adaptation to change – as in renewal and revival.

Read current examples from this book (pages 76-82) in Geoff's article in this ***Renewal Journal – Community Transformation***



***Looking to Jesus: Journey into Renewal and Revival***

by Geoff Waugh (2009)

*Autobiographical discoveries of renewal and revival by this Australian Baptist minister and missionary.*

**Chapters:**

**Preface: thanks**

**Introduction: Waugh stories**

**1. Beginnings: state of origin**

**2. Schools: green board jungle**

**3. Ministry: to lead is to serve**

**4. Mission: trails and trials**

**5. Family: Waughs and rumours of Waughs**

**6. Search and Research: begin with A B C**

**7. Renewal: begin with doh rey me**

**8. Revival: begin with 1 2 3**

**Conclusion: begin with you and me**

This book traces the author's journey through a lifetime of discovering renewal and revival. He explores the transforming and unpredictable nature of God's Spirit now touching and changing people in all denominations and in all countries. The book will interest people who love to read about renewal in the church and revival in the world. The author's other books such as *Flashpoints of Revival*, *Revival Fires* and *Revival in the South Pacific* give fuller and more general descriptions of God's transforming work around the world. This autobiography gives a personal account of the author's experience of renewal and revival in Australia, the South Pacific, and in other nations. "*Looking to Jesus*" points continually to Jesus, the One who renews and revives us by his Spirit within us and who is so powerfully at work in the whole world.

*By Rev Dr John Olley, former Principal of Vose College, Perth.*

### *Invitation to a Journey*

Geoff Waugh's life and ministry have influenced people all around the world. This autobiography with reflections will be of interest not only to those who know him. Beginning in Australia, then Papua New Guinea, his invited ministry in renewal and revival has involved every continent. While he has written "Flashpoints of Revival" (recently updated) recounting revivals in the past three hundred years around the world and many books of bible studies this book "Looking to Jesus" has a different focus, as Geoff traces his journey from strong roots which remained the solid core of his life from childhood to marriage to retirement. Here is a personal journey with reflections that will enrich the lives of all readers. As he looked to Jesus along the way he was opened up to many exciting new ventures in Australia and into countries where revival and renewal is vibrant, changing many lives. Although a biography, many others are involved. Geoff's journey is like a rose bush with strong roots and branches. He is one bud of many, opening into a beautiful bloom as he opened himself to God's leading into an exciting journey. A bonus is an appendix with outlines of his other works.

***By Romulo Nayacalevu, Pastor and Lawyer. Fiji***

***Faith journey***

Dr Waugh's account in "Looking to Jesus" demonstrates his passion and servanthood life, displayed in his calling from the pulpit to the mountains and valleys of the Pacific and beyond. His passion, zeal and commitment to the Gospel makes Him a true missionary to places where we wouldn't dare. I would recommend this book to all, the story of a man who is truly sold out to His King and Master – the Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Waugh's personal journey and convictions is a testimony to people like me who are trying to be available to God's call. Dr Waugh remains a mentor and a friend and "Looking to Jesus" is the simplest way of describing Dr. Waugh's faith journey. His testimony will challenge us all about our priorities and the true meaning of Obedience. A *strongly* recommended read.

***By Jo, Pastor and college graduate***

***Essential reading***

I have been blessed to be a student of Geoff Waugh in the COC Bible College in Brisbane. This book was such a blessing. It showed how God has been such a huge part of Geoff's life, since he was a young boy. It was really inspiring to read the book and to realise all the amazing things God has done through Geoff, that he is not just a teacher on revivals, he is really someone who lives it! I highly recommend this book. We need more fathers in the faith who have walked with Jesus for so long and who have seen real moves of the Holy Spirit to share with us and encourage us like Geoff does in this book. This is not just a biography, it is a book that will teach and inspire you in your walk with God.

## ***Renewal Journals***

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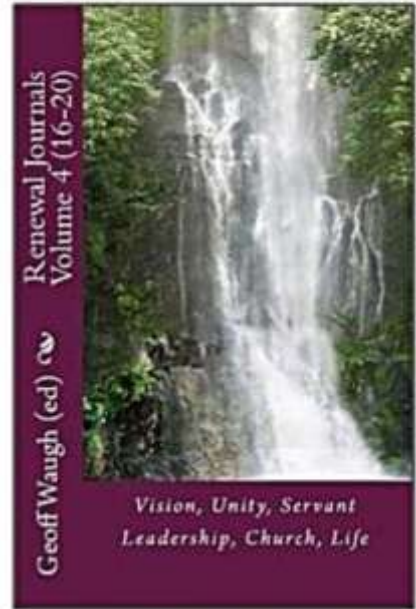
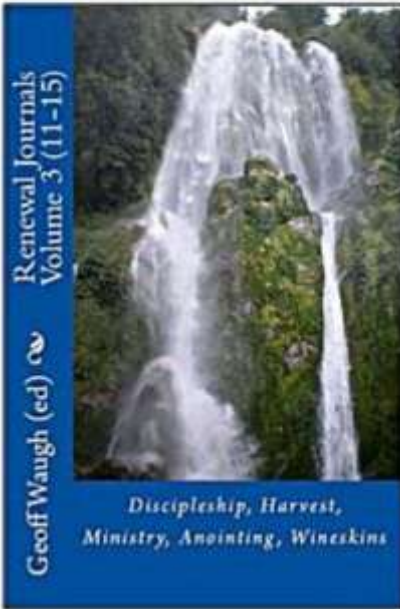
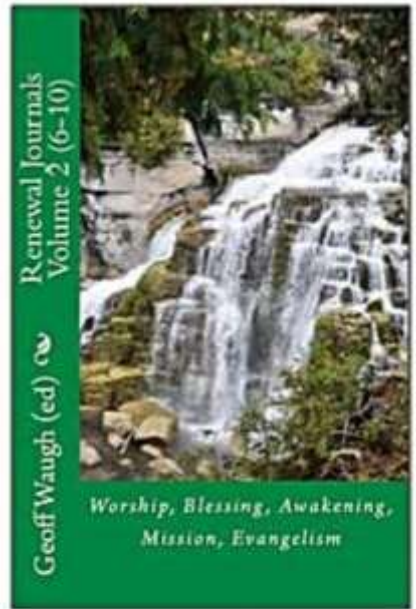
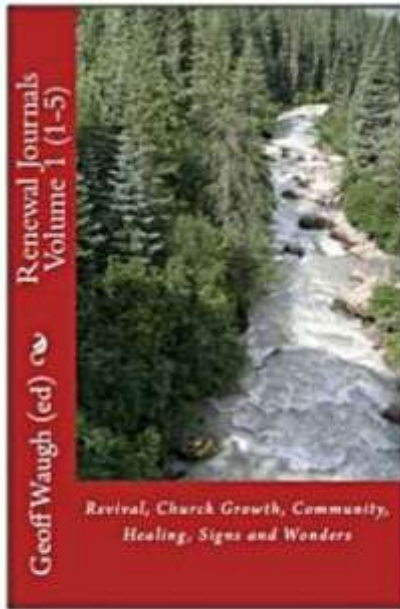
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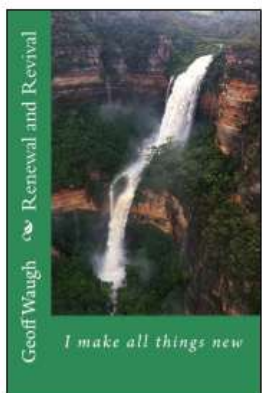
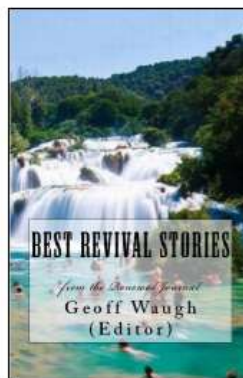
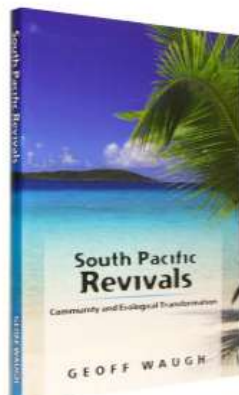
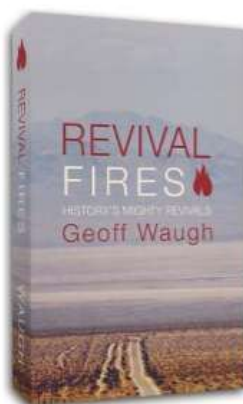
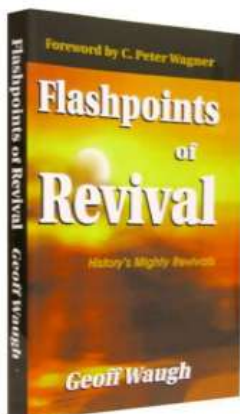
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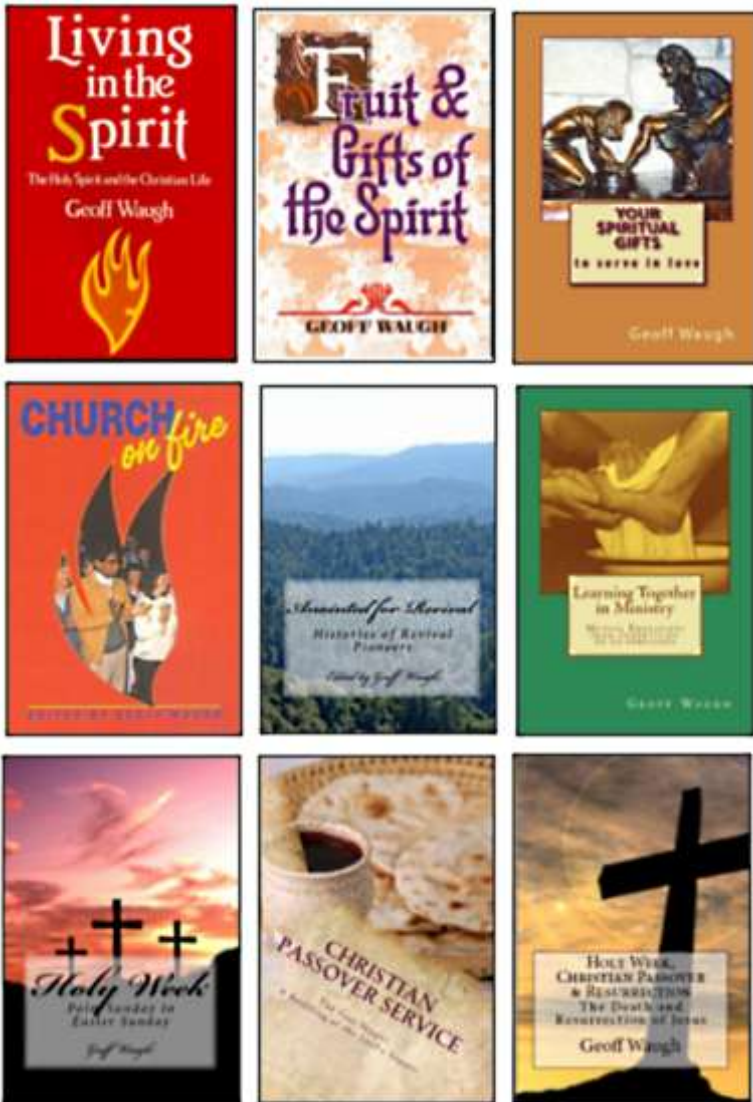
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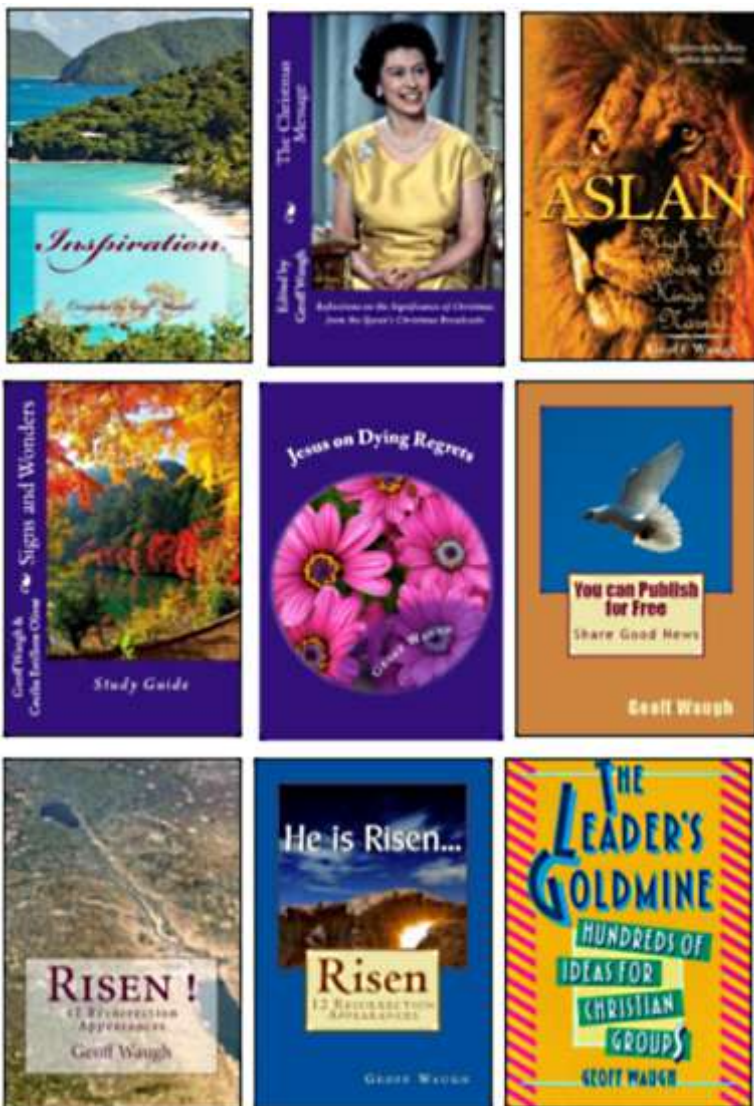


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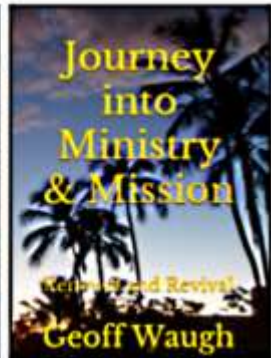
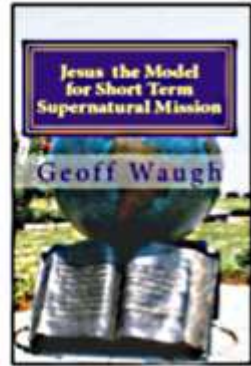


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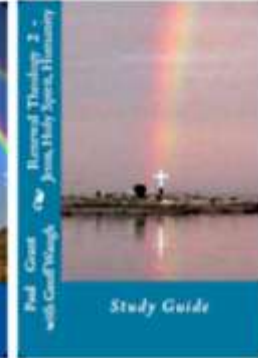
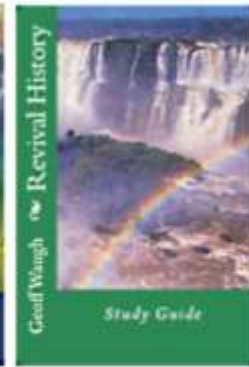
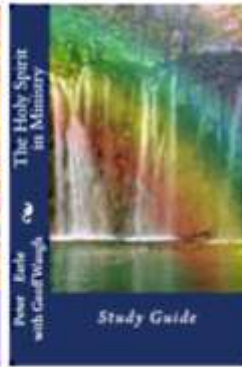


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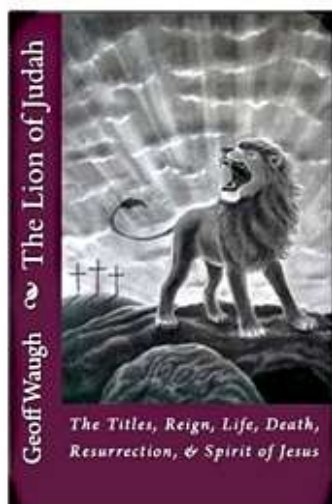
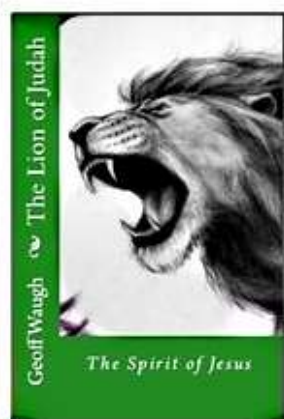
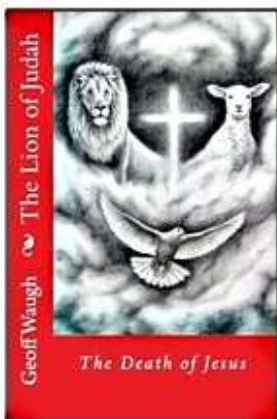
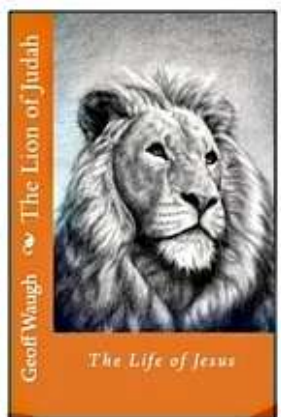


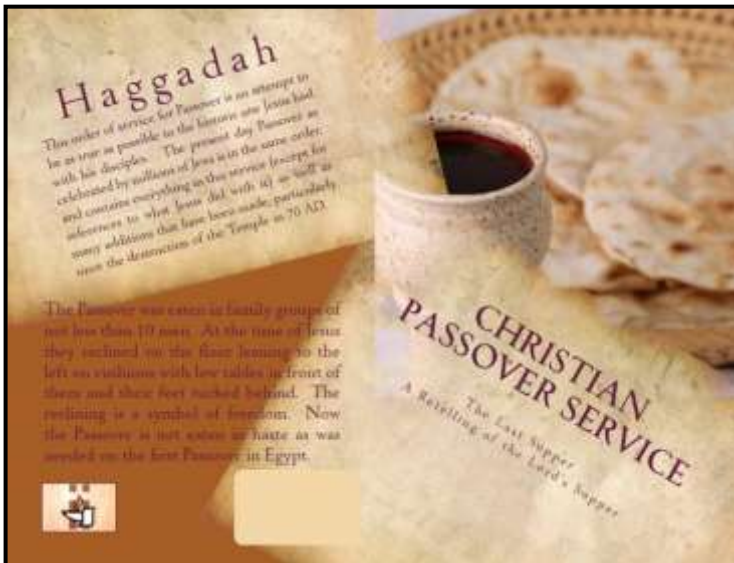
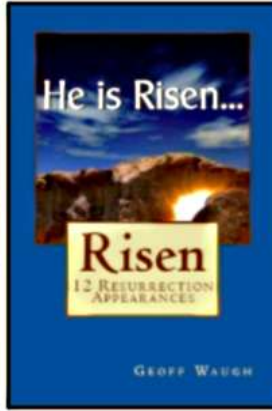
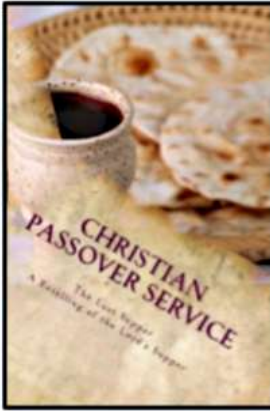


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[\*Renewal and Revival\*](#), comprising

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

[\*Anointed for Revival\*](#)

[\*Church on Fire\*](#)



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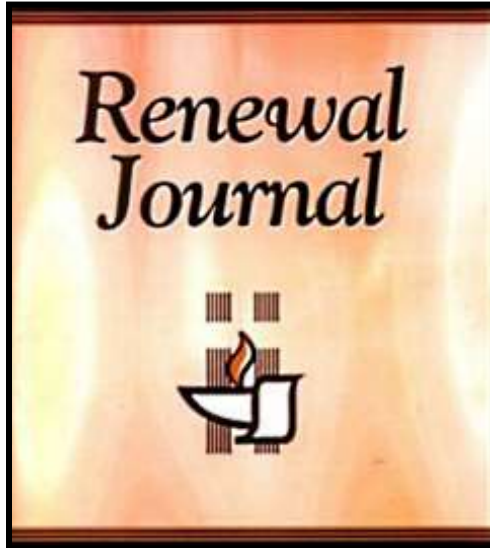
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