

## **Australasian Charismatic Movements and the “New Reformation of the 20th Century?”**

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### **Abstract**

This paper raises the problem of using a heuristic such as 'waves'—common in the historiography of Pentecostalism—to organize historical accounts, either by direct application, or as a longer-frame contextualization. By looking closely at the rise of Italian pentecostalism, and its co-location with multiple sources of revivalism and denominational formation, it seeks to demonstrate that:

- (1) Wave metaphors undervalue the complexity of the observed experience;
- (2) Wave metaphors preference Anglocentric accounts located on transatlantic evangelicalism and national frames, and do not work nearly so well in relation to diasporic narratives
- (3) 'network' approaches to modelling pentecostal emergence are a more accurate form of heuristic.

The case study focuses in particular on the longitudinal connections between revivalist movements, on southern rather than northern narratives, and synchronic accounts which extend church based narratives into broader social contexts. Much material not previously made available in English is used, demonstrating the linguistic, cultural and temporal/ geographic limitations of 'wave' theory and the need to move to network metaphors.

## Introduction

There have been many attempts to define the charismatic movement of the 20th century. Simon Coleman's work on the Swedish church, Livets Ord, describes it as "spreading the gospel of prosperity". In her work on American churches and on Pandita Ramabai, Edith Blumhofer locates the Christian spirit movements of the 20th century as "World Christianity"<sup>1</sup> (as opposed to transnational Protestant or globalized denominational movements). Her intention here is distinguish between "Christianity around the World" (which is the way that Jay Riley Case and others such as Matthias Deiningner use the term)<sup>2</sup> and the sort of indigenous spirit movements which converge from multiple points of origin into a sort of *sacriscape* (not her words) of mutual recognition.<sup>3</sup> This latter is a view that has been further developed by Allan Anderson in his "many Jerusalems" theory of multigenesis,<sup>4</sup> and my own work.<sup>5</sup> For Protestant Charismatics, however, torn between wanting to maintain their churchmanship and theology while adopting "the new thing that God is doing", one of the more common self-descriptions has been "the new

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1. Personal correspondence.
  2. Jay Riley Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812-1920*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 5; Matthias Deiningner (ed), *Global Pentecostalism: An Inquiry into the Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Anchor Academic Publishing, 2014, 5-6.
  3. The term comes from the work of Arjun Appadurai on globalization (see his 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', in M. Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture*. London: Sage, 1991). For a contextual use, see Maureen Ann Hinkley, "An exploration of inculturation: The International Jesuit Education Leadership Project for Central and East European educators", DEd (Teachers College, Columbia University), 2001.
  4. Allan H. Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism: global charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
  5. Mark P. Hutchinson and John Wolffe, *The Cambridge Short History of Global Evangelicalism*, Cambridge: CUP, 2012; Mark P. Hutchinson, "'La Farina del Diavolo': Transnational Migration and the Politics of Religious Liberty in Post-War Italy," in Adam Possamai, B. Turner, and P. Michel (eds), *Religions, Nations and Transnationalism in Multiple Modernities*, London: Palgrave McMillan, 2017.

Reformation". As Corten and Marshall-Fratani note,

The 1980s and '90s have seen the development of an increasingly complex web of transnational Pentecostal networks, where flows of people, money, ideas and images circulate with growing speed and intensity, defying all attempts to pin them down to any particular source or destination. Modes of identification have become transnationalised, and converts place the representation of a global movement with a historical mission to accomplish at the heart of their new faith. Could this 'movement' be expressing a new form of Protestant ethic, or to use current theoretical language, a new 'imaginaire'?<sup>6</sup>

On this celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, then, the question arises: is it? Can this significant slice of global Christianity be compared to the fundamental schism which followed from the Protestant Reformation? What are the consequences for the answers to that question in the way we write the religious history of the twentieth century? These are not 'merely' academic questions. They are important to the hundreds of millions of charismatics who are labouring away inside mainline traditions, expecting that they will be the heirs of fading theological empires. They are questions vital to independent and new church founders, who (in seeking grounds for their theological innovation) often turn to this idea as a means of self-legitimation. They are questions, too, for ecumenists and inter-denominational statesmen, seeking for ways to understand the discussants as the basis for energizing Christian cooperation. This paper will use examples drawn from the Australian charismatic experience to test a number of assertions, common in the literature, as to the parallels and differences between the two movements.

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6. André Corten, Ruth Marshall-Fratani (eds), *Between Babel and Pentecost: transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, online.

### **Australasia and the issue of historical importance.**

Before proceeding to matters of definition, why Australasian case studies? When proposing Australian topics in American settings, it is not unusual to receive body language, and sometimes explicit statements, of disinterest. “Too local, too far, too small” are the common responses by ‘northern’ publishers, journals, conferences. This is an unfortunate case of the publishing tail wagging the scholarly dog, and there are good reasons to think that it should not be so. First, it is now fairly clear that the old national frame which has dominated religious history is no longer adequate, particularly in explaining globalizing movements. Political actors (among the emerging globalised powers) now clearly (in ways in which we in the West, with our presumptions of the ‘normal’ presence of the church in public affairs, and our polite acceptance of secular norms, do not) that a sufficient aggregation of transnational charismatic networks is in fact a competing order. China’s cyclical repression of rapidly growing Christian churches,<sup>7</sup> Singapore’s arrest and repression of flashy charismatic mega church pastors,<sup>8</sup> semi-official encouragement for campaigns by populist Islamism against Christians in Indonesia and Malaysia,<sup>9</sup> the attempt to co-opt the more authoritarian elements of evangelical inner discipline into the political orders of Korea, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands - these are all straws in the wind. Religious globalisation may progress separately from Roland Robertson’s other three types of globalisation (cultural, economic and political), but all of these forms inevitably meet in the

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7. Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, ‘Red Tape: China Wants to Constrict Christian Activities with 26 New Rules Both official and house churches now face bigger threat than cross removal campaign’, *Christianity Today*, 10 March 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2016/october/red-tape-china-constricts-christian-activities-sara.html>, accessed 6 October 2016.
  8. Tessa Wong, ‘Inside Singapore’s City Harvest megachurch scandal,’ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34589932>, accessed 6 October 2016.
  9. ‘Indonesian authorities demolish churches in Aceh’, BBC World Asia, 19 October 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34570570>.

potentials provided by local places and peoples.<sup>10</sup>

There are also good methodological reasons for historians to pay more attention to this region. Oceania suffers from a form of politico-economic quantitative imperialism. Historical studies of the twentieth century Pentecostal and charismatic upsurge have suffered from what one Pacific scholar has referred to as “the donut effect”:<sup>11</sup> studies concentrate on the Pacific Rim (in the study of pentecostalism moving from Chile, Colombia, Guatemala and Central America, Mexico, California and up to Seattle, then Korea, China, Singapore, and some work on South East Asia),<sup>12</sup> while largely ignoring the vast 'liquid continent' in the middle. That has, in large part, been left to the anthropologists.<sup>13</sup> Africa and China have politics, according to most historians, but apparently the Pacific only has culture. Counter to this, however, much of which is central to understanding the 'Reformation of the twentieth century'<sup>14</sup>, has links to this 'continent' of four great islands and innumerable

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10. Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1992, 51.
  11. Bob Hodge and John O'Carroll, *Borderwork in Multicultural Australia*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2006, 177.
  12. Martin Lindhardt, *Power in powerlessness: a study of Pentecostal life worlds in urban Chile*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012; William Mauricio and Cely Beltrán, *Del monopolio católico a la explosión pentecostal: pluralización religiosa, secularización y cambio social en Colombia*, Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Sede Bogotá, 2013; Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem*, Houston, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010; Candy Gunther Brown (ed.), *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011; Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006; Michael Wilkinson, Peter Althouse (eds), *Winds from the north: Canadian contributions to the Pentecostal movement*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010; Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A history of Korean Christianity*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Jie Kang, *House church Christianity in China: from rural preachers to city pastors*, New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2016; Georgie Lee and Galven Lee, *Unfolding his story: the story of the Charismatic Movement in Singapore*, Singapore: Genesis Books, 2015; Robert L. Winzeler, *Popular religion in Southeast Asia*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
  13. See Naomi Haynes, 'A New Perspective on Schism', *Books & Culture* Sept/Oct 2016, 14.
  14. Clifton R. Clarke, 'Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method',

smaller ones. It is worth remembering that it was there, rather than to the political pressures of India or the promise of China, that the London Missionary Society sent its first significant number of missionaries, and there that (with the conversion of Pomare II) that indigenous self-propagation of the Christian gospel first began to chain react,<sup>15</sup> resulting in local revivals, indigenous church movements and (in places such as Tonga and Fiji) national conversions. Oceania is still one of the most Christianised parts of the world - and while there is great interest among scholars as to whether there are more Pentecostals in Brazil or evangelicals in China, it is in the Pacific where the Protestant religious economy has (on a per capita basis) more impact than anywhere else on earth.

In the rise of charismatic Christianity, these vast spaces have been crucibles for religious innovation. Even on the fringes of colonial Australia, the space for experimentation created by frontier self-reliance resulted in a remarkable upsurge of pre-Azusa Street charismatic forerunners. Thirty-five years before Azusa Street and 20 years before the Cherokee County revival (1896) there were tongue speaking Methodists in rural Victoria.<sup>16</sup> Out of the same Scots-Irish communities also came some of the more significant forerunners for global Pentecostalism. It was to Melbourne in 1902 that Minnie Abrams and Manaramabai (the daughter of Pandita Ramabai) went to get a better idea of what revival meant,<sup>17</sup> and in Melbourne that John Alexander Dowie connected with the Irvingite tradition of prophecy and healing. Some of

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in Clifton R. Clarke (ed), *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers 2014, 21.

15. Viz. Neil Gunson, 'Pomare II of Tahiti and Polynesian Imperialism', *Journal of Pacific History* 4 (1969), 65-82.
16. Viz. Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia*, Louisville: Emeth Press, 2011.
17. Mark P. Hutchinson, 'Abrams, Minnie Florence, (1859 - 1912)', in *Australasian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, <http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ADPCM/article/view/189/186>, accessed 6 October 2016.

these leaders, such as James Moore Hickson<sup>18</sup> and John Alexander Dowie (influenced by the healing and prophetic practices of M. H. Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church in Carlton),<sup>19</sup> went on to travel *both* the new American *and* the older Imperial/ Commonwealth religious pathways, becoming thereby significant contributors to 20th century pentecostalism. With their close connection to the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand would become important mediators of charismatic experience and teaching for this vast, if often overlooked, region of the world.<sup>20</sup> There is no room to explore this further here, but suffice to say that what we now understand about charismatic Christianity in the global North cannot exhaustively be known without reference to events and movement in the liquid continent. If there has been a charismatic “new Reformation of the 20th century”, key indicators of it will be found here.

## Definitions

Let us, then, define our terms. What was the Reformation? I will not attempt to belabour the question in all its intricacies: there are many better equipped than I at this conference who can explore the issue in detail. Its definition has divided historians, though, as the Catholic historian Peter Marshall has noted, historians used to at least purport to know the “quite

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18. Mark P. Hutchinson, “Hope, John (1891-1971)”, in *Australasian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, <http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ADPCM/article/view/212/209>, accessed 6 October 2016. James Moore Hickson, *Heal the Sick*, New York: E P Dutton and Co., 1924, 6ff.
  19. Peter Elliott, ‘Nineteenth-Century Australian Charismata: Edward Irving’s Legacy,’ *Pneuma*, 34.1, 26-36; Mark P. Hutchinson, ‘Edward Irving’s Antipodean Shadow’, *Australasian Pentecostal Studies*, no. 10 (2006-7), online <http://aps-journal.com/aps/index.php/APS/article/view/26/23>, accessed 6 October 2016.
  - 20 See my ‘The Latter Rain Movement and the Phenomenon of Global Return’, pp. 265-284, in M. Wilkinson and P. Althouse (eds), *Winds from the North*.

different answers” which they promoted.<sup>21</sup> The Reformation is different things for different people:

1. A story of spiritual liberation through the restoration of, or return to, biblical Christianity
2. A story about the victory of humanism, resulting in the rise of a liberal, critical faith which is ‘semper reformanda’
3. A story about the end of Christendom
4. A story about the origins of the Enlightenment and the secular, modern world
5. An early form of bourgeois revolution, which either or both entrenched patriarchy and fundamentalism or released the power of capitalism
6. For Catholics it was the release of anarchy upon the world
7. For modern ecumenists it was all a sort of unfortunate mistake.

To this, Emidio Campi notes the importance of eschatological hopes to the ecclesial Reformation in its forerunners and 16th century outworkings. It can be forgotten at this remove, that the Reformation was for many of its participants an end times phenomenon. Many are not now so focused on a single one of these narratives, but combine or switch between them depending on whether they are talking about causalities, outcomes, or the sort of shorthand needed to build accounts of the world which resulted from its impact. Like the Cretaceous period comet which left its imprint in the Chicxulub crater on the Yucatan peninsula, it depends on whether one’s predilection is for dinosaurs or Dostoevsky as to how one tells the story.

Definitions of “global Pentecostalism” or “the charismatic movement”--often referred to in the literature as neo-pentecostalism--are no easier to grasp.<sup>22</sup> It is, say Corten and Marshall-Fratani, “A ‘bricolage’ of extremely

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21. Peter Marshall, *The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: OUP, 2009, 1.

22. On some of the problems of definition, see my “The Problem with Waves: Mapping

heterogeneous elements”, which seems to have most in common a reaction to modernity and modernisation, and “the paradox of difference and uniformity, of flow and closure, that seems to be at the heart of processes of transnationalism and globalisation.”<sup>23</sup> This, however, is not a description of charismatic movements, but rather an explanation as to why they seem to have found such fecund ground in the 20th century. In that, and in their ability to generate interest and diversity of opinion, the Reformation and 20th Century charismatic movements seem to share a ‘syndrome’, if not a common diagnosis. Is their diversity of interpretation more a disease of the language of disciplines, and their relationships with the various presents of the scholars involved, rather than something intrinsic to both movements? The definition, however, does demonstrate two things. First, one might say that the two are *different* in the sense that one was entangled with emergent *internationalisation*, while contemporary charismatic movements are entangled with emergent *transnationalism*. Secondly, as is evident in much of the interpretation of neo-pentecostal movements in mainstream churches, the dominant interests of the interpreter dictate the window through which the subject is described.

### **The internal narratives of the Charismatic Movement.**

Where many scholars ‘miss the boat’ (a helpful metaphor for the liquid continent) is that their work does not take seriously the charismatic movements’ internal narratives about themselves. As with the Reformation, many in the Australian charismatic movement saw their movement as “a story of spiritual liberation”, and for many (but not all) this was a liberation “through the restoration of, or return to, biblical Christianity”. In the first instance, many

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Charismatic potential in Italian Protestantism, 1890-1929”, paper presented at The Charismatic Movement in Historical Perspective, 1950-2000, Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford, 13-14 September 2016.

23. Corten and Marshall-Fratani (eds), *Between Babel and Pentecost*, online.

pentecostals and, later, many Australian charismatics, saw in their experience of the Spirit a point of ontological connection with the early Christians of Acts Chapter 2. This was not, as Chris Forbes notes, merely wish fulfilment.<sup>24</sup> The experiences described in the oral history of both the ‘long history’ of Christianity and the present history of Christianity are not unlike one another phenomenologically, are both marked by present-past-future text bridges (“this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, that in the last days”), and are not much like other ecstatic movements in the ancient or modern worlds. Glossolalia and prophecy came to Australia with the Catholic Apostolic Church in the 1850s, found local agents among Methodists in the 1870s, are exported to the USA with John Alexander Dowie’s Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (1888), and are regularly found in Christian revivalist movements (quite separately from external influence) on the Australian frontier. Elliott has connected Irving to Dowie through Melbourne,<sup>25</sup> Chant has connected both Dowie and Methodist “sounders” to early Australian pentecostalism (prior to the Azusa Street Revival) and early pentecostalism in the USA,<sup>26</sup> and there are members (such as Arthur Jackson) common between the early Methodist revivalist charismaticism and the neo-pentecostalism of the 1960s.<sup>27</sup> In that sense, such movements can be seen as *translocal* -- they are connected to one another in part by the movements of particular people, but more often by local cultures responding to biblical primitivism in the context of some social or ecclesiological crisis. For the Irvingites, it was Napoleonic Wars and the crises of Empire; for the Methodists, the crisis of legitimacy

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24. Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and inspired speech in early Christianity and its Hellenistic environment*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1995, 144ff.

25. Peter Elliott, ‘Nineteenth-Century Australian Charismata: Edward Irving’s Legacy’, *Pneuma* 34.1 (2012), 31-33, 35.

26. Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost*.

27. M. Hutchinson, “Jackson, Arthur Marchant (1918-2006)”, *Australasian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* [ADPCM],

<http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ADPCM/article/view/214/211>, accessed 29 Dec

2016. The references to particular cases come from entries in the ADPCM at the same locus.

brought on by the German theology and their own mainstreaming; for the early pentecostals, broader ecclesial liberalism in the cities seemed to be white anting the experientially generative power of Christianity on the frontiers both geographical (such as up in the cane fields of Queensland, where the Enticknap family were brought into Pentecostal faith by the revival centred on their farm at Macknade) and social (such as the socially marginalized in Brisbane's West End and in Fortitude Valley). Each of these, importantly, is a specifically translocal rather than an essentially transnational phenomenon. The founders of the Temple Trust in Australia, that body which formalized local charismatic experience in local churches to a matter of regional and national organization, did not find their inspiration by going to England. Rather, they were a group of people influenced by the almost universal circulation of the book *The Cross and the Switchblade*, and aimed to travel to New York to see in David Wilkerson's newest instantiation of the materiality of the Holy Spirit the present working of the ancient story. On the way, because they were members of the post-British imperial world, they passed through London, and so fell in with the influence that actually opened up the emerging charismatic world to them: Michael Harper's Fountain Trust. The importance of this story is that they were not self-consciously "going to America" or "going to Britain". Rather, they were following stories of spiritual liberation along the lines of globalizing narratives. The transnationality of their efforts was only apparent after the event. The influence of such charismatic actors became movements (i.e. spread) when the crisis of the moment provided parallel (if not common) situations in often widely separated localities. As such, they do not appear to contemporaries (or indeed, to most later historians) as movements, until one begins to look at the stories they tell about themselves, the common players and relationships which bind distant localities together.

For key charismatics in the early 1960s, personal, social and ecclesiological crises often went hand in hand. John Wyndham, an Anglican minister in North Parramatta, was struggling with the rapid growth of North Parramatta growing under the flood of post-war migration and baby boomer

suburbanization. Alan Langstaff, a Methodist minister in eastern Sydney, has had one burn out experience and feels like he is nearing another as he attempts to reach out to the dislocated youth who flock to the seaside suburbs. James Esler, a Catholic priest, is bowed down under several heavy jobs in a religious order (the Marists) struggling to meet its commitments, when he is ordered to add the straw of a Friday night prayer meeting to the camel's back. Even for those whose vocations did not pressure them to breaking point, there were significant stresses. Jim Glennon, for example, bore scars from the past which his encounter with Baptism in the Spirit helped heal. 'Some have had serious personal difficulties before their Baptism in the Spirit', is how one contemporary reporter put it.<sup>28</sup> In each case, the charismatic experience and its attendant inrush of power helped heal a self-fractured in the process of holding religious ideals in the midst of modernity. For the clergy, the pressure of modernity was often applied through the bureaucratisation of structures, the semantic emptying of traditional forms and the overloading of parish life. For the laity, it was often the fracturing of personal involvement in communities through the imposition of rapid change to apparently changeless truths. For both clergy and laity, renewal was an experience of (re)integration of the self, a self which had either lost its connection to its community of meaning, or had never had it in the first place. For most of them, it was a reintegration which took place through the text of the Bible, which provided them with an unquestioned authority source which reframed their problems in ways which stepped around the embattled, bureaucratized tradition of their churches.

The tension between the first and second definitions of the Reformation is equally evident within the charismatic movement. In part, however, the problem is with the word "humanist". There are immediate ties between the university-based nominalist scholars (Luther, Melancthon, Calvin) who form such a key part of the Reformation's intellectual thrust, and their Christian humanist forebears. Charismatics, however, live on the other side of the

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28. *Catholic Weekly*, 23 Sept 1971, p. 17.

fundamentalist-modernist divide, after a century or so of the secularization of the University. What has Jerusalem got to do with Athens? How can “this [be] that”, a story about “the victory of humanism”, the “liberal, critical faith which is ‘semper reformanda’”? It is true that there were (*de facto*) great practical restraints: Christians moving out of Protestant biblicist traditions often did so in reaction to the rise of liberalism, in the direction of more fundamentalist readings of the bible. In that sense, for early charismatics, the term “humanism” had already been co-opted, and so explicitly rejected by those (mainly from the reformed traditions, such as Francis Schaeffer, Hermann Dooyeweerd, Rousas Rushdoony et al) who later provided the intellectual frameworks for the post-War neo-evangelicalism which in turn provided a home (albeit a sometimes chilly one) for many charismatics. It is important to note, however, that there was nothing intrinsic to that rejection. Warm, pietistic experientialism was not uncommon among the early higher critics (for Australians, Samuel Angus was the best known fusion of Irish evangelical pietism and German critical thinking). In later years, even the Jesus Seminar (in Marcus Borg) could produce a sort of experientialist “charismatic” critic. A remarkable number of charismatic movements, indeed, emerged in the context of university campuses, to the extent that, in the Catholic world at least, universities such as Notre Dame, Duquesne, and (in Australia) St Michael’s College in the University of Sydney, were critical to the emergence and spread of charismatic faith. It was through the Catholic Chaplaincy at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and thence at Notre Dame and Ann Arbor that Australian academic Alex Reichel experienced the infilling of the Spirit, and through Reichel at a St Michaels prayer meeting that this experience hopped the confessional boundary into Sydney Methodism and Anglicanism. The real impediments for the Charismatic movement in co-opting a Christianised humanist narrative, therefore, were largely pragmatic and contextual.

Australian charismatics lived when and where they did: post-Vatican II, in the midst a rising ecumenism and biblicism, rethinking the crisis of vocations sparked by ecclesiological, institutional and social pluralism,

surrounded by the hard secular left turn of the technocratic Australian university. As such, early Catholic (and indeed many Protestant) Catholics tended to encapsulate, to seek deeper experiences of mutuality in Christian communities such as those which spun off out of the St Michaels meetings among Baptists at Parramatta, Anglicans at Maroubra, Catholics in Surrey Hills, and interconfessionally among assorted Protestant and Catholic families in Emu Plains and in Brisbane. For most of these traditions, the fact that they didn't develop a Christian humanist intellectual tradition was not because they left the University, so much as the fact that the universities in Australia had left them. Christian humanism was never strong in Australia because intellectual life, as a whole, was not strong, and the churches were largely legislatively squeezed out of the universities: instead, the great church traditions in Sydney were neo-Thomism and reformed evangelicalism. Only the Catholics really had the institutional base and the numbers to produce an alternative, but they were still (up until the 1960s) an Irish, colonial church, which had no local version of Louvain or Notre Dame until the 1990s. By that time, the charismatic foot soldiers of the Archdiocese of Sydney had largely been absorbed into the Catholic institutional discipline required by the culture wars which marked Australian political and social life from the early 1970s onwards. Sydney Anglicanism took a hard right, reformed turn, leaving charismatic renewal to be pursued largely in Canberra, Bunbury, Northern Queensland or other marginal dioceses, none of which had the institutional strength to produce the sort of indigenous charismatic/ reformed theology called for by international teachers such as Thomas Smail,<sup>29</sup> or the 'field pneumatology' of a John McIntyre.<sup>30</sup> (Even in such international circles, Smail

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29. Nigel G. Wright, "The Charismatic Theology of Thomas Smail", JEPTA XVI (1996), 5-18.

30. John McIntyre, *The Shape of Pneumatology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004, 212. There is certainly nothing in Australia to parallel Craig Keener's remarkable *The Mind of the Spirit*, and most leading charismatic theologians (such as Rikk Watts and Graham Twelftree) have had to leave the country in order to pursue a career.

noted that the Charismatic movement was one in need of a theology, but -- *pace* Packer's famous statement--was not one which was looking for one.)<sup>31</sup> So, there was no humanist 'semper reformanda' at the basis of the global and/or Australian charismatic movements, though theologizing about the nature of what it means to be human has trickled into such circles in later years. The self-definitional emphasis of large charismatic megachurches (such as Hillsong, which dominates the Australian pentecostal scene) on "preaching to peoples' Mondays", and on personal growth and flourishing, might be seen as a sort of humanist turn, explicitly rejecting the tendency of the movement's founders to spiritualize everything in their drive towards *theosis*. It has yet, however, to find theological form.

### **The Charismatic Movement as the End of Christendom.**

To what extent, then, is the charismatic movement, like the Reformation, a "story about the end of Christendom"? This depends (by extension) on one's definition of Christendom. For Catholics of a historical bent, such as Marshall, the term can be used to mean "the abode of all the Christians", or alternatively the historical artefacts coextensive with the post-Constantinian and later the Carolingian states. As Thomas Curry notes,

The gravitational force of Christendom, built up over more than fifteen hundred years, remains strong. The silence of those empty spaces created by the disappearance of established churches can still disturb or even terrify those who are not religious.<sup>32</sup>

Others, however, would say that the Reformation was not the end of Christendom at all, but rather its post-Westphalian nationalization. There is no

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31. Thomas Smail, Andrew Walker, and Nigel Wright, *Charismatic Renewal: The Search for a Theology*, London: SPCK, 1995, 49.

32. Thomas J. Curry, *Farewell to Christendom: The Future of Church and State in America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, 5.

room here to follow this debate. As noted above, for Charismatics, there are both strong biblicist (and so nationalizing), but also strong incarnationalist (and so localizing) tendencies. In the former mode, charismatics (such as Howard Carter's appropriation of Paul Collins' Logos Foundation, which was imported to Australia from New Zealand in 1969) emphasize the moral order, the need for righteousness in the nation called of God, and so the demonstration of a national essence and teleology. As a tiny minority, this has not had the sort of influence in Australia that the left, always seeking to discover a revanchist political right against which it can define itself, has sought to ascribe to it. Where it seems to have had real influence is in the Pacific, where there are consolidated majority cultures with religious inflexions, and which come to conceive of themselves as under political, cultural, demographic or ecological threat. In her study of Fijian and Papua New Guinean Pentecostal evangelists, for example, Karen Brison notes that, despite their marginalisation in the scholarly work by historians on the rise of the global charismatic movement, Pacific Islanders today are much more important in the religious counsels of the world than they are in the economic or the political.<sup>33</sup> It is an important observation - though, as Csordas notes, religious globalisation is "*independent* of economic globalisation",<sup>34</sup> there is a sense in which it is *compensatory*. Those marginalised by economic or political globalisation can still become "big men" by joining and/or developing what the literary critics might have called alternative discourses, but which in a global setting effectively become transitive economies, of respect and superordination. The role of Australian charismatic and pentecostal missionaries, training schools and denominational missions in developing these alternative discourses has been significant.

On the other hand, the translocal nature of charismatic movements sees them flow readily across national borders. In this sense, there is a core

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33. Karen J. Brison, 'The Empire Strikes Back: Pentecostalism in Fiji', *Ethnology* 46.1 (Winter 2007), 34.

34. Thomas J. Csordas, *Transnational Transcendence: Essays on Religion and Globalization*, Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 2009, Introduction, 1-30.

ambivalence to the movement: Christendom goes wherever they do, but at the same time, the Christendoms they build are mere microstates. Often, their largest contribution is in provoking energy from other movements, as often to the left as to the right of the political spectrum. As Anthony Gill points out, the mere presence of evangelical competition in the “religious marketplace” changes the behaviour of the Catholic majority:

Catholic Churches in states where competitive religious markets exist are more likely to pressure authoritarian states to democratize. Conversely, Catholic Churches in non-competitive religious markets with a high degree of state regulation of religion are less likely to pressure authoritarian states to democratize.<sup>35</sup>

Charismatic pietism, then, can have its own sort of political effect, depending on what else is happening in the system. There is some evidence that this has been the case in the Philippines, where Protestant charismatic missionaries from Australia and New Zealand helped spark growth in lay Catholic charismatic movements such as El Shaddai. Depending on whether one defines Christendom, then, as a consolidated religio-political reality, or as the historical demesne of Christians, charismatics have encouraged both astatalism *and* constantinianism, Christendom visions (via the Logos Foundation) and visions of charismatic missions moving “amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea” (via YWAM and other incarnational missions movements such as Servants of Asia’s Poor). Was the charismatic movement a Reformation in the sense of following the story about the end of Christendom? Well, it depends on which charismatics, when and where.

### **The Charismatic Movement as Secularizing Materialization**

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35. Quoted in Peter J. Schraeder, “State Regulation of Religion and the Role of Catholicism in Democratic Transitions and Consolidation in Predominantly Catholic Countries,” in Michael J. Schuck, and John Crowley-Buck (eds), *Democracy, Culture, Catholicism: Voices from Four Continents*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, 302.

Marshall's fourth and fifth definitions (of the Reformation as a story about the origins of the Enlightenment and the secular, modern world; and about bourgeois revolution) are, of course, specifically linked to high level historical metaphorisations. The ideas of "enlightenment" and "revolution" are, as much as "Christendom" or "Reformation" themselves, subject to differences of historical opinion over definition, ideology and application. On the face of it, neither can relate to the charismatic renewal, because both are unrepeatably historic events subject to the Reformation, and the immediate tendency is to assume that there is not much which is particularly rationalist about the charismatic movement. Again, such assessments are based on imported assumptions. While it is true that the charismatic movement is strong on dreams, visions and the Romantic language of the Spirit, it is also very strong on evidentialism and physical observability. Here too, the Australian charismatic movement has made a mark, quite literally. If one drives through Grant County, Kentucky, the Ark Encounter Theme Park (built under the direction of Ken Ham) provides the sort of materialization that (as Umberto Eco once wrote) Americans seem to love. Ham is a Queenslander, a state known in Australia as the "deep north" for its conservatism and religious piety. It has been the starting point for many of the neo-pentecostal revivals which have shaped Australia, from Macknade, through the Brisbane revival of 1932 (under William Booth Clibborn), to indigenous revivals in and around the Daintree, through to predecessors of what later merged into the Toronto Blessing, early signs of which emerged in New Zealand. Among Ham's greatest supporters over the years have been the extensive Christian schools network, and megachurches such as Christian Outreach Centre, Brisbane. This latter was specifically the outgrowth of the charismatic renewal among Methodists such as Clark Taylor, in the 1970s, spreading rapidly through Queensland's *pasifika* connections to Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, and thence through Asia. COC is one of five Australian neo-pentecostal global networks, each featuring tens of thousands of members,

which have spread throughout the world.

For the academy, however, the charismatic movement presents significant methodological problems. As Robbie Goh and others have pointed out, charismatic megachurch cultures have an intense material culture which seems, to outsiders, at odds with their mystical professions. I have shown elsewhere that some insight into why this should be so arises from the work of Peter Sloterdijk, who unpacks the nature of spiritualities as technologies. This is not a contemporary invention: 18th and early 19th Century theologians from Paley onwards were fascinated by the idea of evidences, to the extent that (as John Haldane shows) these essentially replaced revelation as the chief concern of moral philosophers through the first part of the nineteenth century. The charismatic movement builds on the evidentialism intrinsic to pentecostal healing movements of the 1880s and 1950s, and tries to have its cake and eat it to. Though the charismatic movement can, in a sense, create an alternative discourse, its chieftains still need to negotiate the boundaries of the world created by the Enlightenment. As Wokler notes, this was

a particular period in European intellectual and political history which, to my mind, came to exercise a decisive impact upon what in the West has come to be understood as genuinely modern society.... [T]he perennial discourse of modernity [are comprised of] the conceptual frameworks around the Protestant foundations of capitalism as introduced by Weber, or of the force of will and subjectivity in civil society and the state as explained by Hegel, or of egalitarian democracy as portrayed by Tocqueville, or of the class structures of industrial capitalism as depicted by Marx.<sup>36</sup>

It is a society marked by inner rationality, by post-Christendom presuppositions, by capitalism, bourgeoisification, and democracy.

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36. Robert Wokler and Bryan Garsten (ed), *Rousseau, the Age of Enlightenment, and Their Legacies*, Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2012, 188-9.

Interestingly enough, those are precisely the terms in which many theorists describe the expansion of charismatic Christianity in the Pacific and the majority world. The globalizing networks, it is purported, across which Australasian charismatic churches have grown entangle majority world peoples in “material anxieties” and individualization, promising a divine abundance through variants of the prosperity doctrine:

This abundance is intertwined with a late capitalist logic that foregrounds a consumption that eclipses production and a trust in the intertwining of faith and neoliberalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 295–298). It distances itself from the abundance one expects from the kind of divine protection mediated by traditionalist churches and structures of rank, in that it is understood by congregants as a personal contract with God rather than a social one. Its idiom, inscribed in bodies, clothing, language practices, parables, and faith itself, is deeply embedded in a modernity that rubs shoulders with the modernity of the second-hand marketplace, the gym, the neoliberal state, and the diaspora but nevertheless has its own distinctive configuration.<sup>37</sup>

The near omnipresence of this sort of contextual critique of charismatic expansion makes it difficult to disentangle from the internal games and engagements of an academia which is itself under pressure from globalisation. To what extent, Arjun Appadurai asks, are scholars actually seeing something ‘real’ in their analysis of this post-Enlightenment, bourgeoisified charismatic world, and to what extent are they simply voicing an increasingly parochial “apartheid” wherein:

The academy (especially in the United States) has found in globalization an object around which to conduct its special internal quarrels about such issues as representation, recognition, the “end” of history, the specters of

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37. Niko Besnier, *On the Edge of the Global: Modern Anxieties in a Pacific Island Nation*, Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2011, 229.

capital (and comparison) and a host of others.<sup>38</sup>

The picture emerging here is one of mutual incomprehensibility between the academic and the charismatic, and yet, oddly, a parallel faith in the materializing power of words. As Wokler dismissively describes the linguistic turn in the social sciences with regard to what he sees as their increasing detachment from the reality of the Enlightenment. “In the beginning was the word, and the world which we inhabit has been manufactured in its image, freshly ground in a crucible of linguistic change.”<sup>39</sup> Does the charismatic movement promote Enlightenment and bourgeoisification on the Marshall template? It appears that it depends on who is describing what charismatic movement, when and from what analytic position. A certain amount can be said without suggesting that Rousseau would be willing to adopt the modern charismatic movement as offspring of his thought. The movement certainly promotes a certain lightning bolt inner rationality, a set of spiritual technologies and capital which, in contexts lacking other forms of capital, promote the social mobility and aspirations of significant populations. While those following Berger (Grace Davie, Thomas Csordas, among others) speak about this as a form of ‘re-enchantment’,<sup>40</sup> Appadurai convincingly also calls us to see it as a form of alternative globalisation, or (as an alternative to the alternative) ‘globalisation from below’.<sup>41</sup>

As with the Catholic apologetic response to the Reformation, the number of those who reacted to the Charismatic movement as a release of anarchy upon the world is not insignificant. These are not just to be found among the ideologues, such as John F. MacArthur, whose book *Charismatic Chaos* was a sort of *Malleus Maleficarum* for Calvinist evangelicals in their boundary wars

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38. Arjun Appadurai (ed), *Globalization*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, 11-12.

39. Wokler and Garsten, *Rousseau, the Age of Enlightenment, and Their Legacies*, 189-90.

40. Thomas J. Csordas, “Oxymorons and Short-Circuits in the Re-enchantment of the World: The Case of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal,” *Etnofoor* 8 (1995): 5–26.

41. Appadurai, *Globalization*, 12.

with Christian spirit movements. Writing about the charismatic movement draws together a strange alliance of peeved mainliners who work in theological institutions, disappointed former Marxists and material critics, anti-globalisation activists, global security apparatchiks, psychologists, and the like. In this world, charismatic anarchy threatens this or that status quo, be it Anglicanism through the involvement of Singaporean or Nigerian bishops in the Anglican Mission in the Americas; charismatic missionaries acting as “spies” for foreign powers; prosperity preachers fomenting anti-gay laws, the burning of witches, leading people astray from national cultural alignment, or whatever other issues may be to the front of mind for this or that reform or power bloc. For Australian charismatics, the fault lines have been over the rise of the Welfare State and the dominance of the related professions. In the 1950s, the rise of the Healing Revival sparked parliamentary attention when A. C. Valdez Jr. ran into trouble with the British Medical Association, who accused him (in his healing evangelism) of practising medicine without a licence. In 1956, in an encounter famously told by David Harrell, the visiting Oral Roberts folded his tent and fled from Melbourne in the face of opposition by trades unions, media and cultural nationalists in key positions of municipal power.<sup>42</sup> There was low level conflict over this in Australia through the 1960s and 1970s: “low level” in part because the idea of the Welfare State (so dominant in the British discourse which informed so much of Australian policy formation) was never seriously questioned, and was indeed massively expanded under the Whitlam government in the early 1970s, and in part because neo-pentecostals formed a tiny minority until the collapse of mainline denominational numbers in the mid-1970s, and the rapid growth of pentecostal megachurches thereafter.

As the federalised Australian Welfare State staggered into funding problems in the 1990s, there was increasing conflict between these churches

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42. David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985, 76.

and the political, media and professional elites contingent on that State. The collapse of Mercy Ministries, a locally-sponsored international ministry for young women, in 2009 was a lightning rod for the tensions, demonstrating both incompetence on the one hand, and the hard edges of the secular public square on the other.<sup>43</sup> It also demonstrated the ability of such megachurches to reinvent and adapt: Hillsong emerged from this scandal, and a long running public disagreement with local residents in Rosebery over the building of a new church complex,<sup>44</sup> chastened, but with a very large unspent extension fund which it then used to support its extension globally. As I note elsewhere, less than a decade later, even as the left-leaning public broadcaster (the ABC) was exploring the death of the charismatic movement,<sup>45</sup> Hillsong was such a religious cultural icon that, even in the midst of Anglican and Catholic cultural dominance:

the archetypical Labor Party ‘hard man’ and ‘unfinancial Catholic’ Graham Richardson, referred to Hillsong founder Brian Houston as ‘a walking phenomenon’ on his Sky News program (albeit more as a form of religiously-led Australian export booster than as a spiritual leader).<sup>46</sup>

In this sense, the Australian charismatic movement passed through the period in which it was indeed portrayed as a form of anarchy released upon the world, an “unfortunate mistake”, to being both hysterically vilified and warmly praised for becoming part of a new neoliberal order.<sup>47</sup> Inside the Catholic

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43. Ruth Pollard, “Mercy Ministries home to close”, 28 October 2009, online.

44. “Hillsong withdraws DA for Rosebery site”, *South Sydney Herald*, August 2008, on *Redwatch*, <http://www.redwatch.org.au/media/080806sshb>, accessed 28 July 2016.

45. Compass (ABC Television), “Whatever Happened to... The Charismatics”, aired 21 July 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s3795778.htm>.

46. Mark P. Hutchinson, “Just up the Windsor Road’: Social complexity, geographies of emotion and the rise of Hillsong”, in Tom Wagner and Tanya Riches (eds), *You call me out upon the water: The Hillsong Movement Examined*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, (forthcoming 2017).

47. See Ibrahim Abraham, “Capital, Culture and Contradictions: Contemporary Christian Economic Ethics,” *Pacifica* 22 (February 2009), 62; Marion Maddox, *God under Howard*:

Church, Australian charismatics such as Brian Smith were intrinsic to the movement becoming canonically normalized, making its way even to the centre of Catholic identity. By the time of the election of the Argentinean charismatic, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, to the papacy as Francis I, the movement had been so essential to the Church's ability to resist secularization that the new Pope could refer to the CCR as "born of the will of the Spirit as 'a current of grace in the Church and for the Church.'"<sup>48</sup> If the Reformation and, by extension, the charismatic movement, were indeed releases of anarchy upon the world, they seem to have pretty quickly become mechanisms for new orders. This suggests that the original analysis (as cause, rather than response, to contemporary social and political disorders) is probably incorrect. Neither the Reformation nor the charismatic movement were essentially anarchic. They were, however, responsive to larger scale changes, both heralding and entrenching themselves within the new orders which resulted.

### **Conclusion:**

To what extent, then, can the rise of charismatic Christianity in the 20th century be seen as a 'new Reformation'? In answering this question there are, as noted, significant definitional and methodological issues which arise from historical contingency and perspectivalism. As Vico noted in the *Scienza Nuova* (Book IV), while there are regularities (an "ideal eternal history") one movement is never going to be identical to another, simply because they inhabit different times and travel different courses. The charismatic present is unlikely to spark another Enlightenment, purely because *that* Enlightenment has come and gone, and there is already a massively globalized information/ knowledge

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*how the religious right has hijacked Australian politics*, Crow's Nest: Allen & Unwin, 105ff.

48. Keith A. Fournier, "A Current of Grace: Address of Pope Francis to the Charismatic Renewal Conference in Rome", *Catholic Online*, 7 June 2014,

<http://www.catholic.org/news/international/europe/story.php?id=55674> (accessed 29

December 2016).

apparatus in place. (One could conjecture here--as some people have with the rise of the new Atheism--but I am not sure that this is historically helpful or relevant.) In that sense, the very present usefulness of the term “the new reformation” to charismatics, opens up a space of contestation with historic Christian communities for whom the original Reformation is definitional. It is from this space that many of the most energetic polemics about the value, or otherwise, of the charismatic movement, have emerged. This, and the secularist fundamentalism of those who claim the modern as their own, aside, there are clearly resonances between these two great events. They are both, in Phyllis Tickle’s terms, ‘great emergences’ which change, and are changed by, their times in ways which transform Christianity. Like it or not, the massive charismatic presence within and between denominational Christianities today has changed the face of, and even to some extent co-opted, “World Christianity”. As a great process of change, aimed at restoring a form of primitive Christianity to the whole of the Church, the parallels with the Reformation are apparent. Its attitude to the bible has been different from that of the Reformers, who in a sense backed into their biblicism out of the scholastic and humanist traditions of the time. It is, however, nonetheless, an energetic biblicist movement, which is developing new approaches to bridging the now two millennia between the Book of Acts and the present. Their dependence on a hermeneutic of “this is that”, on any reading of Paul or the Reformers, is not unfamiliar, though the doctrinal spread and the liturgical practices adopted clearly differ. Attitudes to reason, to the market, and to the nation state also diverge, in part because these are inflected differently (due to the cultural rootedness of the “rational”, the variability of the market, and the intrinsic translocality of charismaticism). As a whole, the charismatic is only now rediscovering the Christian humanism which was so important to the reformers. Whether they can then develop a tradition of *semper reformanda* which remains rooted in that tradition, is yet to be seen. David Martin,<sup>49</sup>

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49. David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2002, 28.

however, predicts that that moment is coming, and indeed, with the proliferation of charismatic universities and Colleges around the world, may well be upon us.

The discussion around the charismatic movement as “a new Reformation” is probably best parsed, then, through the first part of the phrase (new) rather than the second (Reformation). The great difference between the two movements is that the charismatic movement is comfortable with the new, the modern, in ways in which the Reformers could not have been. While they are often primitivists driven by the desire to live an Acts 2 spirituality, charismatic spirit movements as a whole do not feel the need to develop a systematics which bends their current realities out of shape. They live then in a continuation of Acts, rather than simply Acts 2, in their own presents. For the Reformers, as a whole, the biblical canon closed the order of revelation, a conviction they carried through in harring the charismatics of their own time. For 20th century charismatics, God can (within limits) continue to do ‘a new thing’. The two movements thus have informative similarities, but profound differences. In this sense, it can be said that, yes, this is a new Reformation - a modern Reformation, partially a result of and in line with the first great change of that name, but inevitably different from it.

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