

Glory and Shame: The Rise and Fall of the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand¹

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Abstract

The charismatic renewal movement may arguably have begun earlier and had a greater penetration of the historic churches in New Zealand than in any other country in the world. A remarkable example of this is the renewal movement in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Unlike movements that rejected the renewal, early Presbyterian reports on neo-Pentecostalism recommended engagement with people who had experiences of the Holy Spirit. A number of Presbyterian churches became notable centres of charismatic renewal. The Paraclete Trust (later Presbyterian Renewal Ministries) attracted talented leaders and powerfully influenced the Presbyterian Church. Its policy of focussing on the transformation not just of individuals but of congregations left a legacy of regional churches which are today among the most significant in the Presbyterian movement. But at the peak of its influence, the leadership of Presbyterian Renewal Ministries was captured, and it ceased to be a transformative grassroots movement. Over time, a couple made it their personal ministry and abused the trust of many participants. The movement began to display cult-like tendencies and finally went out of existence. This tragic story is published here for the first time.

Introduction

We are indebted to Peter Lineham for an account of the sorry tale of the rejection of the charismatic movement by the Brethren assemblies in New Zealand.² The standard Brethren response—like other cessationist groups—was that charismatic gifts had ceased with the end

¹This article is an expanded version of a paper presented on 3 December 2018 at the “Religion Matters” conference held at Massey University, Auckland, to mark the retirement of Peter Lineham as Professor of History.

² Peter Lineham, “Tongues Must Cease: the Brethren and the Charismatic Movement in New Zealand,” *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* 96 (December 1982): 1–48.

of the apostolic age. This suggested that there was no value in learning from people who claimed such gifts, since, by implication, they were self or satanically deceived. In striking contrast, a recurring theme of early Presbyterian reports on neo-Pentecostalism to the General Assembly was consideration of what could be learned from engaging with people who claimed personal experience of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. This was so with both the 1967 report on Pentecostalism by the Southland-based Life and Work Committee, presented by Rev J. D. S. (Jim) Moore, and the 1972 report of the Waikato-based Life and Work Committee, presented by Rev Robin Lane.³ Formerly marginal Pentecostal groups were becoming better known among Presbyterians in the 1960s. Particularly influential were the impact of Rob Wheeler's Bible School in Tauranga and tent campaigns in northern New Zealand, and Ron Coady's outreaches in the Presbyterian heartland of the south, which contributed to the emergence of the indigenous Pentecostal movement.⁴

Promoting such interaction, the subsequent 1973 Assembly report featured the testimonies of two ministers, an accountant, and a woman schoolteacher in support of its finding that Presbyterians "who have had some form of Pentecostal experience need to be recognised as contributing members of the Body." In 1974, the Life and Work Committee held a consultation with charismatic ministers and met for a whole day with the charismatic Church of Scotland theologian, Tom Smail, Michael Harper's colleague in the Fountain Trust, the British renewal service group.⁵

Lineham notes that many defectors from the Brethren movement joined Baptist churches or formed Brethren-style charismatic fellowships, such as Upper Hutt Christian Fellowship or Northcote Christian Fellowship in Christchurch.⁶ However he does not mention the impact that two former Brethren, Frank Garratt and John Brook, had on the beginnings of Presbyterian charismatic renewal.

1. Brethren Pioneers

Frank Garratt was from a leading Napier Brethren family and a member of the Tory Street Hall in Wellington. With no contact with Pentecostals, and after a year-long study of the Holy Spirit in the Bible convinced him of the validity of this experience, Garratt was baptised in the Holy

³ Excerpts from Assembly reports on neo-Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement are included in Tom Waight's School of Ministry dissertation, "'Lord, Renew Your Church ...' A Report on the Foundation and Work of the Paraclete Trust within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand" (Dunedin, 1995), Appendix 1, 46–71. Jim Moore later wrote a book on the Holy Spirit, *The Helper and the Heritage* (Dunedin: J.D.S. Moore, 1982).

⁴ Brett Knowles, *New Life: A History of the New Life Churches of New Zealand, 1942-1979*, 3rd. revised ed. (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2015), 42-57, 67-72. Knowles attributes much of the growth of the indigenous Pentecostal fellowships in the South Island in the early sixties to "Coady's personal drive and energy" and "his controversial, aggressive style of evangelism" (234).

⁵ Peter Hocken, "Fountain Trust," *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess & Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 646, hereafter cited as *NIDPCM*. Smail's book *Reflected Glory: The Spirit in Christ and Christians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), was reviewed in the first issue of *The Paraclete* (April 1976), 9-11.

⁶ Lineham, "Tongues Must Cease," 35.

Spirit in 1951, on the fourteenth day of an extended fast in his Wellington home.⁷ This was nine years before the date customarily given for the beginning of the international charismatic renewal movement—the celebrated occasion on 3 April 1960 when Dennis Bennett told his Episcopalian congregation in Van Nuys, California, that he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues, leading to his resignation in the ensuing controversy.⁸

The next year—on 10 September 1952—Garratt’s wife Mary was baptised in the Holy Spirit on the eighth day of her own extended fast.⁹ In 1954, in response to these developments, the Garratt family was summoned to Napier and “disfellowshipped” from the Brethren assemblies.¹⁰ They then began to attend the Evangelical Pentecostal Mission Church, which met in the Red Cross rooms in Vivian Street—Wellington’s earliest Pentecostal fellowship. Ian Garratt explains that at the time this group had no pastor but met in Brethren-style around the Lord’s Table with anyone able to contribute. “The only difference was they exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their meetings.”¹¹

In 1962 the Garratts were invited by Kingsley Fairburn, minister of St John’s Presbyterian Church, to be “camp parents” at the Wellington Presbyterian Bible Class Easter camp. When the camp speaker—considered to be theologically liberal—was taken to hospital in an ambulance, Frank Garratt was invited to give the remaining talks. According to his son Ian, “dozens of young Presbyterians” received Christ as their Saviour.¹²

As a result, the Garratt family moved to St John’s, where Mary Garratt’s grandfather, John Moir, had been the first minister. There, with the Van Zweeden family leading the Sunday School, the Vink family the junior Bible Class, and the Garratts leading the senior Bible Class, they built a flourishing youth ministry of “well over 100” that introduced many young people to life in the Spirit.¹³ Frank Garratt was a dedicated Bible student. He believed the Holy Spirit was sovereign to distribute gifts as he wished and did not accept Pentecostal teaching that tongues were the necessary sign of Spirit baptism.¹⁴

John Brook was the adopted son of a Palmerston North Brethren family. After graduating he

⁷ The correct order of events leading to his father’s baptism in the Spirit is given by Ian Garratt in *Western Suburbs Christian Fellowship: A Brief Background and History* (self-published, 2016), 3–4. The order of Ian’s account, “Shut Out, Yet Empowered,” in Bev Montgomery with George Bryant, *Transformed Lives: The Move that Shook the New Zealand Church* (Auckland: Castle, 2010), 89–90, was changed by the editor despite his protestations.

⁸ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* dates the beginning of charismatic renewal to this event. Martin E. Marty, “The Pentecostal Phenomenon,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica Yearbook, 1973* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973), 592.

⁹ Ian Garratt, “Shut Out, Yet Empowered,” 90, *Western Suburbs Christian Fellowship*, 5.

¹⁰ Harvey G. Rees-Thomas, *100 Years on the Street: A Story of God’s Grace through Tory Street Hall, Elizabeth Street Chapel, and The Street City Church* (Wellington: His Services, 2017), 135.

¹¹ Ian Garratt adds that when the fellowship “became Elim under Pastor [Gilbert] Dunk from the UK, this open format changed.” (*Western Suburbs Christian Fellowship*, 9).

¹² Rees-Thomas, *100 Years on the Street*, 135.

¹³ Scott Thomson, *Church Standing Tall: A People’s History of St John’s in the City, 1853–2003* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2003), 95, 113.

¹⁴ Ian Garratt, *Western Suburbs Christian Fellowship*, 7.

was travelling secretary of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. In June 1973, while training for the Presbyterian ministry, he was baptised in the Spirit during the mission of English Anglican renewal leader David Watson¹⁵ to Otago University. He spent time at St John's College, Nottingham in a personal course arranged for him by the English scholar-evangelist Michael Green, then he and Lynette moved into the Watsons' rectory at St. Michael-le-Belfrey in York. Brook helped as researcher for two chapters of Watson's widely read book, *I Believe in Evangelism* (1976).¹⁶

In April 1976, John Brook and Newton Fink became the first editors of the Presbyterian renewal magazine, *The Paraclete*. A fine teacher, Brook was ecumenical chaplain at Massey University, where his charismatic campus services attracted some 100-150 students. Fink was minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Palmerston North. A Messianic Jew, his funeral service was performed for him by his South African Jewish diamond magnate family when he professed faith in Jesus as Messiah. He was spontaneously baptised in the Spirit while praying for the 1972 Presbyterian General Assembly in Palmerston North.

2. Early Stirrings

The earliest Presbyterian minister to be baptised in the Spirit appears to have been Rev Douglas Watt, minister of Greyfriars Presbyterian Church, Mt. Eden, Auckland (1953-67). He was ministered to by "Mr. Pentecost," David du Plessis, on a trip to the Netherlands in 1963. In one of his regular columns in the *New Zealand Herald* he subsequently wrote:

I have to stand beside my fellow townsman Edward Irving here and state my belief that the use of "tongues" in the form of ecstatic utterance or as an expression of communion with God is perfectly Scriptural. Nor should it be looked upon as an emotional extravagance.¹⁷

Watt, like Irving, was born in Annan, Dumfriesshire. Criticised and derided in his time, Edward Irving (1792-1834) is belatedly being recognised as a forerunner of the charismatic renewal movement. Not only did an outbreak of speaking in tongues occur in his Church of Scotland congregation in London in 1831, but he articulated a charismatic understanding of Jesus' ministry which recognised that Jesus ministered not out of his divine nature but in reliance on the Spirit, who constituted him as Messiah at his baptism (Acts 10:38).¹⁸ The Catholic Apostolic Church, founded after Irving's removal from his London pulpit in 1832, is best

¹⁵ Peter Hocken, "Watson, David C. K.," *NIDPCM*, 1186.

¹⁶ The book was dedicated to Watson's mentor, John Collins, vicar of St. Mark's, Gillingham, the first Church of England parish to be involved in charismatic renewal.

¹⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 14 November 1964, *Logos*, 1 (May 1967): 2. Liz Ward tracked down the *Herald* reference for me.

¹⁸ The relevance of Irving's theology was recognised by Church of Scotland ministers Gordon Strachan (*The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973) and Thomas A. Smail (*Reflected Glory: The Spirit in Christ and Christians*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975, 68-77). It has been picked up by New Zealand Presbyterian scholars John Roxborough ("As at the Beginning in Britain: Michael Harper, Edward Irving and the Catholic Apostolic Church," *Theological Renewal*, 11 (1979): 17-23), and Rob Yule (*The Holy Spirit as Person and Power: Charismatic Renewal and Its Implications for Theology* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019], 50-54).

known for affirming the restoration of prophets and apostles along with charismatic gifts, and left an enduring legacy in New Zealand and Australia.¹⁹

After his encounter with the Spirit, Watt developed a pioneering ministry of divine healing on Sunday afternoons in the Ellen Melville Hall, High Street, in central Auckland. However, he lacked a model for integrating charismatic gifts into the life of the congregation and Greyfriars was not more broadly impacted by charismatic renewal.

Stirrings of Presbyterian renewal began in the mid-1960s. Murray Robertson and Brian Caughley led the 1965 Wellington Presbyterian Bible Class Easter camp. A number of young people were converted. Subsequently Robertson and Caughley started a discipling group for them in an upstairs room at St Giles, Kilbirnie, where Caughley's father was an elder. Robertson says, "The first night the Holy Spirit came down and the group rapidly multiplied until there would have been fifty or so young people, nearly all Presbyterians crammed into this little room. This was my first experience of a Holy Spirit inspired movement."²⁰

Two months later Robertson left to study at New College, Edinburgh. The "Monday Night Group" continued to meet in the "Upper Room" till 1972. At the beginning up to seventy attended, the St Giles elders had to impose a 10 p.m. curfew, and "many people were saved, filled with the Spirit, healed and exercised gifts of the Spirit."²¹ Robertson, meanwhile, fell out with his Church of Scotland supervising minister (who he found to be "a tyrant") and left the Presbyterian Church.²² He would serve his entire forty-year ministry as pastor of what became a leading charismatic church, Spreydon Baptist (December 1968-February 2009)—sometimes jokingly called "the largest Presbyterian church in New Zealand!"²³

In March 1968, a Presbyterian printer in Tauranga, Norby King, began a monthly paper called *The Forerunner*. The first issue encouraged readers, "Stay in your churches. The gifts of the Spirit can be operated in home groups." Circulation grew from 600 to 3,000 in three years. The Presbyterian Moderator during 1968, Paddy Jansen, carried copies of *The Forerunner* in his travels, giving them to those who were interested.²⁴

3. Renewal Matures

Anglican clergyman Ray Muller returned from working with the Fountain Trust in England in

¹⁹ It established churches in Wellington (1863), Auckland (c1894) and Dunedin (late 1890s). Its Australasian headquarters was in Melbourne, where Irving's son Martyn was Professor of Classics and English at Melbourne University (1856-71) and a leading educationalist. (James Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements in New Zealand* [Bradford, UK: Julian Literature Trust, 1974], 64, 74-78).

²⁰ Murray Robertson, email, 25 July 2018.

²¹ Brian Caughley, "A Hunger for God," in Montgomery, *Transformed Lives*, 77-78, Richard Brader, interview, 15 September 2018. Brader, who joined the group when he came to Wellington in March 1967 and continued till it ended in 1972, recalls a regular attendance of about 30.

²² Kevin Ward, *Against the Odds: Murray Robertson and Spreydon Baptist Church* (Auckland: Archer Press, 2016), 4-5.

²³ Presbyterian features of Spreydon Baptist are noted in Ward, *Against the Odds*, 33, 39, 54, 211-15.

²⁴ *Renewal News* (December 1993): 15. King became a Presbyterian minister in 1973 and in 1975 conducted the wedding of Jim and Rosemary Wallace.

August 1971 and set to work to establish an equivalent New Zealand charismatic service organisation, Christian Advance Ministries.²⁵ The first of its influential Summer Schools held at Massey University, Palmerston North in January 1973, featured the lay Catholic renewal theologian Kevin Ranaghan, who promoted the Life in the Spirit Seminar.²⁶ First published in 1971, this had originated in the Catholic Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, some six months after the community's founding in 1967. Peter Hocken observes that it represented "a genre of spiritual formation long familiar in the Catholic tradition, applied to the situation of the Catholic charismatic renewal"²⁷ —which had begun at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh in February 1967.

The first Presbyterian congregations to be impacted by charismatic renewal were St John's Hastings, St James South Dunedin, Knox Lower Hutt and Titirangi in West Auckland. Bill Lindsay's Life in the Spirit Seminars at St John's Hastings, from 1973, were among the earliest in New Zealand.²⁸ John Niven's charismatic youth ministry in South Dunedin (1972-76) led several young people to enter the ministry: Barry Ayers, David Caldwell, Richard Dawson, Chris Homer, and Murray Talbot. When Bert Tweedie, Scottish minister of Knox, Lower Hutt (1967-84), took a team of twenty-three to the Christian Advance Ministries Summer School in January 1977, all were baptised in the Spirit. The charismatic Sunday evening service grew nearly as large as the morning service. Tweedie, says the church's history, "literally hugged the congregation together!"²⁹

David Strickland was an American who had just completed a doctorate at New College, Edinburgh on "Union with Christ in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford" (1972). Rutherford, a profound devotional writer as well as a theologian, was one of the Scottish commissioners of the Westminster Assembly, which compiled the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1648).³⁰ On Strickland's arrival at Titirangi (1974), the church set a goal of fostering the work of the Holy Spirit. Members attended the Catholic Life in the Spirit Seminar in St Patrick's Cathedral in central Auckland on Monday evenings, joining 800 Catholics and 72 Presbyterians³¹ in what may have been the largest Life in the Spirit Seminar in the world.

4. The St John's Diaspora

At the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1978, Rev. Sam McCay, convenor of the Doctrine

²⁵ Dale Williamson, "An Uncomfortable Engagement: The Charismatic Movement in the New Zealand Anglican Church, 1965-85," PhD Thesis (Dunedin: University of Otago, 2007), 150-56.

²⁶ Williamson, "An Uncomfortable Engagement," 194-99, Barbara Hines, in *The New Day That Dawned: Catholic Charismatic Renewal New Zealand* (Auckland: Catholic National Service Committee, 2017), 46-49.

²⁷ Peter Hocken, "Life in the Spirit Seminars," *NIDPCM*, 840.

²⁸ Along with the Anglican one at St Paul's, Symonds Street, Auckland and the Catholic one at Liston House, Auckland, both of which began in February 1973.

²⁹ Patsy Martin, *Knox Alive! A celebration of 150 years of the Presbyterian Church in the Hutt Valley* (Lower Hutt: Knox-St Columba Presbyterian Church, 2002), 53-54.

³⁰ David Strickland, "The Holy Spirit and the Authors of the Westminster Confession," *The Paraclete*, 14 (published with *Advance*, August 1979), 2-3.

³¹ David Strickland, sermon at Crosby-Ironton Presbyterian Church, Minnesota, Pentecost Sunday, 31 May 1998, describing his experience of charismatic renewal at Titirangi (June Strickland, email, 8 August 2021).

Committee, introduced “A Service of Renewal for Appropriating Baptism,” on analogy with the Methodist Covenant Service. This allowed those baptised as infants to reaffirm their baptism by immersion. Where used, this enabled Presbyterian congregations involved in charismatic renewal to retain many members who would otherwise have sought baptism in Baptist or Pentecostal churches. By contrast, the Uniting Church in Australia, in 1985, forbade ministers from re-baptising those baptised as infants,³² losing many members as a result.

The provision for renewal of baptism came too late to avert a schism at St John’s Wellington. The renewal there was confined to the youth ministry and did not result in transformation of the church. In 1979, tensions over immersion baptism, the role of women, styles of worship, and the gifts of Holy Spirit that had been building since the mid-1970s led to a mass walkout by the charismatic group. Seventy members of the senior Bible Class, including Frank Garratt and later John Vink, left the congregation. A traumatic event, it caused great hurt and involved the departure of talented people.³³

Many of those who left went on to become leaders of other churches or Christian ministries. Barry Austin had already become a leader in Youth With A Mission, England (1976-2019). Alan Vink became pastor of Miramar Christian Centre, Wellington (1983-89) and Central Baptist, Hamilton (1991-2004), before becoming executive director of the Willow Creek Association and more recently of Leadership Worx. His brother Paul led Wellington Youth for Christ (1982-90) before becoming pastor of Lifepoint Assembly of God, Wellington (1991-2003). With his wife Karen, John Crawshaw joined the staff of Lifepoint in 1994 and followed Paul Vink as pastor (2003-2013).

Ross Bridson married Stephanie Black, trained for the Baptist ministry, and became pastor of Waikanae Baptist. Nikky Frater was vicar of Kaitaia Anglican (1996-99), before being appointed Anglican local support enabler in Auckland. Richard Brader became a close associate of Brian Caughley, who had founded Intercessors for New Zealand in January 1972. In 2005 Peter Benge became vicar of St James, Lower Hutt. For many years Jonathan and Fiona Bayliss gave lay leadership at Hataitai Anglican. Frank Garratt himself, after associating for a while with the group that became Lifepoint AOG, joined Eric Chambers at Miramar Christian Fellowship, while Ian Garratt and three friends went on to found Western Suburbs Christian Fellowship in Wellington (1978).³⁴

5. Papakura and Satellites

By the early 1980s successful models of Presbyterian renewal began to emerge. Most open to renewal were the alternative lifestylers reached by David Strickland’s ministry at Titirangi Presbyterian (1974-89). More challenging were the conservative parishioners of central city churches. Grahame Drummond, minister of St Andrew’s Whangarei (1981-93), pioneered a

³² Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 381.

³³ Scott Thomson, *Church Standing Tall*, 119–23.

³⁴ Thomson, *Church Standing Tall*, 123, Ian Garratt, *Western Suburbs Christian Fellowship*, 18-19, Richard Brader, interview, 15 September 2018.

charismatic family service followed by a traditional service to allow both streams to co-exist in the same church. This pattern, in reverse order, was successfully adopted in many Presbyterian parishes.

First Presbyterian Church, Papakura, was impacted by the Queen Street Assembly of God in its heyday under Neville Johnson (1970-83), when it regularly attracted more than 2,000 to its meetings in the Auckland Town Hall.³⁵ Also influential were a number of local charismatic youth ministries such as YWAM, Youth for Christ, and Winkie and Fiona Pratney's Agape Force. There was potential for division, but John Balchin, during his long and statesmanlike ministry (1966-94), successfully contained charismatic renewal and maintained unity in the church. He was a fine biblical expositor who uniquely combined Reformed convictions and a relaxed attitude to diversity. He hosted a variety of styles of Sunday service to allow people to worship in their own particular way, with a charismatic service in the evening.³⁶

Under Balchin's leadership First Church and its satellite congregations in Pukekohe East, Drury, and Bombay grew to be the second largest Presbyterian church in New Zealand, reaching a highpoint of more than 800 at worship between 1987 and 1993.³⁷ For much of the time, Balchin was the only ordained Presbyterian minister on a staff of six pastors, who were given the freedom to conduct baptisms and communion.³⁸ As result of vigorous evangelism by the part-time lay pastor, Steve Millward (1986-97), Balchin's son-in-law, First Church's Rosehill congregation attracted 75-100 mainly Māori and Pacific Island youth and young adults.³⁹ It was the largest Māori congregation in the Presbyterian Church at a time when its official Māori work was languishing.

John Balchin's authority held Papakura together during his twenty-eight-year ministry. But his widely publicised opposition to the national church budget and views of lay ministry sowed the seeds of independency, which led to the unravelling of the church's unity after his retirement. Lay assistant Bruce Bengé led a breakaway group in 1995. Though not qualified or ordained, he felt overlooked when he was not made senior minister and started a new fellowship called The Gate Church. Many left with him, including elders and youth, causing much hurt and grief. One church member at the time recalls that Sunday after Sunday someone else would stand up in the congregation and say that they too were going to The Gate. Another says that it went on so long, they were afraid to go to church to hear which of

³⁵ Ian G. Clark, *Pentecost at the Ends of the Earth: The History of the Assemblies of God in New Zealand (1927-2003)* (Blenheim: Christian Road Ministries, 2007), 184.

³⁶ Steve Millward, *John Balchin: A Biography* (Papakura: Steve Millward, 1994), 65.

³⁷ Millward, *John Balchin*, 60, 108, Tom Phillips, email, 18 April 2019. The largest Presbyterian church at the time was Newton Pacific Islanders Church in Auckland.

³⁸ Millward, *John Balchin*, 89-92. Rev Rod Harris was the only other ordained minister to serve with Balchin. After a stint with the Assemblies of God, he was made responsible for Drury from 1975-89 and reinstated to the Presbyterian ministry in 1983. He left the Presbyterian Church again in 1992.

³⁹ Steve Millward, email, 1 May 2019.

their friends was leaving next.⁴⁰

6. Hornby Presbyterian Community Church

In contrast to St John's Wellington and Papakura, Hornby Presbyterian Church's experience of schism was the catalyst for renewal, not its consequence.⁴¹ A group who had encountered Pentecostal worship at Queen Street Assembly of God and Blenheim Elim left after Rob Yule's first year to form an Elim Pentecostal Church in the nearby Hornby Power Board theatre in February 1980. When it subsequently became apparent that Yule was not about to give up on renewal because the Spirit's more ardent backers had left, members began to leave from the Reformed and conservative evangelical wing of the church. These included the rector and deputy rector of Middleton Grange School and their wives and two pews of Navigator students.

In his desperation, Yule began to pray in the darkened church at night. He remembers pleading for God to rend the heavens and come down, take away the reproach of the church, send an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and create an exemplary Christian community like the early church that would attract people by its worship and witness, its life and service. It would seem that God began to answer these prayers through the visit of Paul Petersen, an itinerant American United Methodist minister, through whom Rob and his wife Christene were baptized in the Holy Spirit on 30 October 1981.

Considering himself a novice in renewal, Yule sought the counsel of Rex Meehan, pastor of Christchurch Apostolic Church, then meeting in the Limes Room of the Town Hall. Many visiting ministries were welcomed to assist in renewal, among them Noel and Phyllis Gibson, YWAM's "Toymaker and Son" team, Marcus Arden, Delores and Bill Winder, Jonathan Boyd, and Rick Olmstead from the Fort Collins Vineyard. Musicians Mike and Viv Hibbert helped the church "break the sound barrier" and begin to use the vocal gifts of tongues and prophecy in worship. Legendary guitarists Kate Goodall (now Schwass) and Robin Lott (now Farrar) led worship for fifteen years till Darryl Tempero's appointment as Creative Arts Director in 2000. What had been a gathered church with no relation to its community grew under Yule's successors, Murray Talbot (1988-2013) and Hamish Galloway (2011-20), to be the leading multi-site Presbyterian community church in New Zealand. It was renamed Hornby Presbyterian Community Church in Talbot's later years and is now known as Hope

⁴⁰ Tom Phillips, a later minister of Papakura Presbyterian, email, 18 April 2019.

⁴¹ The story of charismatic renewal at Hornby Presbyterian is told by Michael Reid, "The Full Message of This New Life: How One Reformed Evangelical Church Came to Embrace Charismatic Renewal," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies*, 5-6 (March-October 2001): 22-39; in Reid's Canterbury University PhD Thesis, "But By My Spirit: A History of the Charismatic Renewal in Christchurch, 1960-1985" (2003), 183-96; by Nyalle Paris, in his Otago University research essay, "Wind of Change. A Theological Reflection on Charismatic Renewal at Hornby Presbyterian Church, 1974-1986" (2006); and again by Michael Reid in *Thus Far ... A Centennial History of Hornby Presbyterian Church, 1908-2008* (Christchurch: Verve, 2008), 184-236. Rob Yule tells of his own experience in the Introduction to his book *The Holy Spirit as Person and Power: Charismatic Renewal and Its Implications for Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019), xv-xix.

Presbyterian.

In the mid-1980s a number of New Zealand charismatic churches began to develop enterprising community ministries. The most notable were the result of the visionary leadership of Brian Hathaway at Te Atatu Bible chapel in west Auckland,⁴² and Murray Robertson at Spreydon Baptist in Christchurch.⁴³ These churches sought to unite evangelical, social justice and charismatic concerns—“word, deeds and signs”—in a holistic theology that inspired the noteworthy “Kingdom Manifesto” (December 1988).⁴⁴

The earliest charismatic Presbyterian church to develop a community trust was St David’s, south Invercargill during Murray Talbot’s ministry. Bruce and Jenny Chilton sold their Hedgehope farm and bought a smaller property on the outskirts of Invercargill. In 1985, with John Cromarty and Michael Schwass, they formed the Tangiwai Trust to meet the needs of the unemployed through market gardening, livestock rearing, and food processing.⁴⁵ St David’s initiative was followed by community trusts in Hornby (1987) and St Aidan’s Putaruru (1992), and by medical centres at Rosehill, Papakura (1990) and St Andrew’s Whangarei (1992). As Schwass observes, these churches realised “that renewal was not the end but a means to the next phase, that of building bridges to the community.”⁴⁶

7. Delores Winder’s Visits

The Presbyterian charismatic service group, the Paraclete Trust, was founded in 1982. Its chairman was Ray Taylor, deputy director (later director) of the New Zealand Employers’ Federation, who gave ten years’ outstanding leadership.⁴⁷ Renamed Presbyterian Renewal Ministries (PRM) in 1989, it profoundly influenced the Presbyterian Church through its quarterly magazine, pre-Assembly conferences, encouragement of renewal weekends between churches, network of regional advisers, and hosting of international ministries.

People brought to New Zealand included Robert Whitaker and Brick Bradford, the minister and lawyer involved in a landmark case in 1968, leading to recognition of charismatic renewal in the United Presbyterian Church in the USA;⁴⁸ Brad Long, executive director of Presbyterian and Reformed Renewal Ministries International and co-author of the important book, *The Collapse of the Brass Heaven* (1994), a critique of the secularist worldview that so impedes the faith of Western Christians; and Dr James Ukaegbu, moderator of the Presbyterian Church

⁴² Brian Hathaway, *Beyond Renewal: The Kingdom of God* (Milton Keynes, UK: Word Publishing, 1990), Peter Hocken, “Charismatic Renewal,” *NIDPCM*, 514. Appendix III of Hathaway’s book (211-19) lists their remarkable range of community outreaches.

⁴³ Ward, *Against the Odds*. 54-60, 67-75, 141-48. By 2005, Spreydon Baptist had twenty community ministries, listed by Ward, *Against the Odds*, 141-42.

⁴⁴ Reproduced in Hathaway, *Beyond Renewal*, Appendix I (193-205).

⁴⁵ *The Outlook* (August 1986), *The Paraclete*, New Series, 10 (October 1986): 3–5.

⁴⁶ *Renewal News* (June 1990): 10.

⁴⁷ Taylor had been baptised in the Spirit on 27 May 1977, during John Brook’s mission to Khandallah Presbyterian Church.

⁴⁸ Vinson Synan, “Presbyterian and Reformed Charismatics,” *NIDPCM*, 995-97.

of Nigeria.

Most influential were the five visits of Delores Winder, whose healing from chronic osteoporosis and reversal of two spinal cordotomies at a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting in Dallas on 30 August 1975 was described by talk show host Sid Roth as “one of the greatest verified healing miracles of the twentieth century.”⁴⁹ Delores’s meetings sometimes ran from 7 p.m. till after midnight. They had an enormous impact, not only in healings, but in conversions to Christ, empowering people with the Holy Spirit, modelling ministry, and reconciling marriages and families. She may have contributed more to the renewal of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand than any other person.

Renewal News reported some remarkable healings. Alys Allen, wife of the minister of Lincoln Union Church, came to Delores’s meeting at Hornby Presbyterian on 10 February 1985. She had suffered traumatic injuries when a drunken driver collided with their car eleven years before. Her legs had been crushed and one telescoped into her body, smashing her pelvis in six places. She lived in constant pain, afraid of people touching her, and reluctant to travel in a car because of the vibration. As she had testified, “I really just wanted to die.”

After Delores laid hands on her and prayed, she remembered little else of the meeting. But as she undressed to go to bed that night she realised her legs were the same length. “I was conscious of pains shooting through my body, and my bladder feeling came back for the first time. For several days I was in a state of bewilderment, but my doctor certified me completely healed.”⁵⁰

Property developer John Christiansen had suffered head injuries, a broken neck, a broken jaw, broken ribs, and collapsed lungs when his car ploughed into a fertilizer truck that turned across his path. He was prayed for by Delores in Rotorua in April 1987. He fell to the floor for half an hour and rose fully healed and with a changed outlook. He also testified, “Before that I believed in nothing. After it, I believed in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit – the lot.”⁵¹

8. Renewal and Evangelism

Rob Yule recalls long discussions with Presbyterian Renewal Ministries’ chairman, Ray Taylor, to persuade him that charismatic renewal was a grace of God not just for the renewal of individuals, but of whole churches and their mission.⁵² As a result, between 1985 and 1995

⁴⁹ Introduction to Delores Winder with Bill Keith, *Surprised by Healing* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2009), 9. Prior to her visits Winder’s healing was described in *The Paraclete*, New Series, 4 (September 1983): 3–4, and in a centre-page handout in *Renewal News* (February 1990). There is a full account by a medical doctor, H. Richard Casdorff, M.D., *The Miracles* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1976), 147–57, in Delores Winder’s two books with Bill Keith, *Jesus Set Me Free* (Safety Harbor, FL: Fellowship Foundation, 1982) and *Surprised by Healing*, and by Craig Keener in *Miracles Today: the supernatural work of God in the modern world* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 72–73.

⁵⁰ Reprinted from an interview in the *Christchurch Press*, *Renewal News* (September 1987): 14.

⁵¹ *Renewal News* (February 1990): 8–9.

⁵² John Brook also believed that “we need to work for the renewal of whole parishes, not just individuals” (*The Paraclete*, New Series, 1, June 1982: 1).

PRM pursued a strategy of renewal not merely of individuals but of whole congregations. This led to the emergence of a network of strong regional churches that have become the flagship churches of the Presbyterian movement: East Taieri, St Stephen's Dunedin, Hornby Christchurch, Knox Lower Hutt, St Alban's Palmerston North, St John's Rotorua, St Andrew's Mount Maunganui, St Peter's Tauranga, St Columba Pakuranga (now Botany Downs), Mahurangi Warkworth, and St Andrew's Whangarei. Many of these churches were singled out as signs of hope in "Strategic Directions," a 2012 review of the prospects of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, but the report made no mention of their charismatic heritage.⁵³

Of the 75 churches listed in a special issue of *Challenge Weekly* on church building projects throughout New Zealand between 2001 and 2006, nine were Presbyterian churches – ten, had St Alban's Palmerston North not been overlooked. "If the Church is supposed to be dying," said reporter John McNeil, "these churches haven't heard about it."⁵⁴

Approaching the decade of evangelism, the Paraclete Trust hoped to commission Steve Millward as the Presbyterian Church's "first national evangelist."⁵⁵ The project never eventuated. Millward later trained for the Presbyterian ministry and established an enterprising regional church plant, Crossroads Church at Mangatangi. But in 1990, Graeme Murray, minister of St Columba, Pakuranga (1970-89), was appointed as Evangelism Co-ordinator of the Presbyterian Mission Resource Team for the decade of evangelism. A winsome and thoughtful charismatic leader, he made a significant impact by producing monthly newsletters, organising evangelism seminars, and hosting visits of the Uniting Church of Australia evangelism consultant Dean Drayton. In 1994 he became the first of nine charismatic ministers to be elected to the Presbyterian Church's highest office of Moderator.⁵⁶

9. Turning Point

Presbyterian Renewal Ministries was highly respected and was transforming the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand. At its peak it is estimated to have impacted half of the church's

⁵³ "Strategic Directions," Report of the PCANZ Strategy Work Group, July 2012, 20, http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/small_file_Strategic_Directions-PCANZ.pdf, accessed 12 January 2022.

⁵⁴ *Challenge Weekly*, 64 (7 August 2006): 1, 8–9.

⁵⁵ *Renewal News* (June 1988): 2, 13. In reality this would not have been the Presbyterian Church's first evangelist. From 1918–34, the church employed John Bissett, of St David's Presbyterian Church, Auckland, as full-time "Assembly Evangelist." His magnetic preaching led to the conversion of a number who became Presbyterian ministers, including Mervyn Milmine, Jack Somerville, Jack Smith and the author's father, Morrison Yule, and others who became influential New Zealanders, such as Sir John Marshall, later Prime Minister of New Zealand, and evangelist Charles ("YMCA") Bennett, wartime supporter of the Māori Battalion and founder of the United Māori Mission.

⁵⁶ The others were Margaret Schrader (1995), Peter Willsman (the first to serve a two-year term, 1996–98), Rob Yule (2000–2002), Garry Marquand (2004–2006), Ray Coster (2012–14), Andrew Norton (2014–16), Richard Dawson (2016–18), and Hamish Galloway (2021–22). The moderatorship is the only democratically elected position in the church, so such appointment not only recognises the calibre of leadership but signifies widespread grassroots support.

congregations.⁵⁷ But its last years were tragic and shameful.

In 1996, PRM was preparing to appoint Roy Christian, long-serving minister of Mangere Presbyterian Church, as its first part-time ministry worker. A former captain of one of New Zealand's most successful rugby league teams (1970-72), Christian had a significant healing ministry, had undertaken two healing tours of New Zealand, and had ministered in the United States with Delores Winder for three months in 1990 and three weeks in 1993.⁵⁸ PRM was waiting for the agreement of his elders.

The crucial meeting took place at Te Atatu Presbyterian Church on 14-15 August 1996. Murray Talbot chaired it in place of the chairman, Jim Wallace, whose wife Rosemary, former editor of *Renewal News*, had recently died. Ian Wood of Te Atatu suddenly applied for the position, supported by a massive forty-page dossier sprung on the meeting, prepared by Margaret Waight in her new role as ministry facilitator.

Christian later expressed surprise at these developments. He had been visited by Ian Wood and Andrew Norton during the week before the meeting to discuss the appointment. "They left with no mention that Ian ... would desire the job." Likewise, he says, "I was surprised when Margaret nominated Ian, because she also had been speaking to me about the position."⁵⁹ A humble man averse to conflict, Christian withdrew his candidacy and the meeting appointed Wood. Talbot explains what happened:

I chaired one meeting. Unfortunately, in hindsight, I trusted Margaret and Ian's word only to find out I had been lied to. Prior to the meeting I consulted with Margaret about the agenda. She told me that Roy had informed her he would not be taking up the offer and that Ian had put his name forward. So I accepted her word as she was the administrator, only to find out that Roy hadn't communicated that to her. But Roy decided to withdraw, I suspect on the basis that he didn't want to work in an untrusting environment.⁶⁰

Wood and Waight ran Dunamis Schools and renewal weekends throughout the country. They maintained a hectic schedule, including three ministry trips to Uganda in 1999, 2000 and 2001. But the ministry assumed a proprietorial tone and pretensions of grandeur. Darryl Tempero, board chairman in 1998, regrets two things that happened under his watch. One was "the grandiose ambition to move away from the Presbyterian Church to other churches," reflected in dropping the word "Presbyterian" from its name. The other was "a turning away from the renewal of congregations to a focus on emotional and inner healing."⁶¹

10. Tragic End

It appeared to many that Wood and Waight hijacked Presbyterian Renewal Ministries. In

⁵⁷ Peter Hocken, "Charismatic Movement," *NIDPCM*, 514.

⁵⁸ Roy Christian, email, 20 August 2018.

⁵⁹ Roy Christian, email, 14 August 2018.

⁶⁰ Murray Talbot, email, 2 August 2018.

⁶¹ Darryl Tempero, telephone interview, 8 August 2018.

August 2002 a new broadsheet, *Experience. The Difference*, replaced the quarterly magazine *Renewal News*. It announced, portentously, “we are committed to you experiencing and participating in greater depth than what *Renewal News* has been able to do.” It was never heard of again. On 31 March 2003, *Renewal Ministries* went out of existence. Its ministry directors, “apostle” Mrs Margaret Waight and “prophet” Rev Ian Wood, formed the “Leading Edge Foundation,” focussing on mentoring, life skills and professional development. A subsidiary organisation, “Soul Purpose,” remained the only church-related programme.

Wood and Waight claimed a link with Peter Wagner’s “new apostolic reformation” in the United States.⁶² But, as many could testify, they displayed an increasingly independent and entrepreneurial spirit, rejecting accountability. They left their marriages and married each other. Wood resigned from the Presbyterian ministry (30 April 2003). The formerly public website became member only. A once participatory grassroots movement became a virtual cult. Many who worked with them because of its good name became hurt and disillusioned. No one knows what happened to its records or its finances.

On 1 February 2006, Wood and Waight formed Coachhouse New Zealand Limited, with themselves as directors. On 4-5 December 2013, Ian and Margaret Wood, by then estranged, were sentenced in the Hamilton District Court to twelve months home detention for stealing \$132,000 from the tertiary education provider Te Wananga O Aotearoa in 2008 and 2009.⁶³

It was a tragic end to a respected ministry that had been transforming the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand. What began with the life-giving Paraclete ended like toxic Paraquat. As Peter Hocken observes in *The Glory and the Shame*:

Leaders of manifest integrity and holiness of life are matched by religious entrepreneurs of less obvious quality, who in some cases fall into grave sin, not only in the United States.⁶⁴

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⁶² Excerpts from Wagner’s book, *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), were published in *Renewal News* (June 1999): 4–8. Wagner’s injudicious commendation of Waight’s book, *As God Intended* (2002), was reported in the last issue of *Renewal News* (April 2002): 11.

⁶³ Belinda Feek, “Pair Who Defrauded Wananga Unmasked,” *Waikato Times* (7 February 2014): 1. The sum was less than the \$220,000 the crown prosecutor alleged had been defrauded.

⁶⁴ *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the 20th-century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford: Eagle, 1994), 11.

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