



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES

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“Do not harden your hearts.....” by Mary Newsom

It has arrived at last! The centenary of the 1904 Revival. There will be much celebration, much prayer and much hope that Revival will happen again. But what is God going to do, in response to our activities?

However I really want to ask a different question, “What are we going to do in response to God and His love?” It all depends on the state of our hearts, so now is the time to examine them. The matter of hard hearts occurs several times in the scriptures. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were forced to spend forty years wandering in the wilderness because they didn’t trust God to lead them into the promised land. Psalm 95 gives a summary of the situation and says that the result will be, “They shall not enter into My rest”. We are in danger of the same outcome because we cannot receive what we don’t believe in.

So let us today “Listen to His voice” and consider what it means to “Harden our hearts”. During the last few months these expressions have come frequently to mind and I believe that God is saying that the Church today does not really believe what the Bible tells us! It believes in a way based on our academic understanding, else we could not call ourselves Christians, but it does not believe that the Holy Spirit can act in power, in us or through us. The Church knows plenty about the Holy Spirit but it does not know Him, or the freedom that could come if He had His way in our hearts.

It was in reading about the incident of Jesus walking on the water in Mark’s gospel, that I realised that when Jesus got into the boat and the wind dropped the disciples were amazed, “for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”(Mark 6:52) This event happened just after the feeding of the five thousand. Now we can understand the amazement in terms of walking on the water (Peter also walked on the water in Matthew’s version) but the lack of understanding was about the way the five loaves were sufficient for five thousand, plus women and children. The disciples had distributed this food, they had collected up the left-overs and yet they had not absorbed the implications of God’s power manifested in Jesus. The question of hardened hearts comes up again in Mark 8:14ff when the subject of bread is raised again, and Jesus said, “Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear?” (NRSV)

It is interesting that Mark next records the healing of a blind man and then soon afterwards Jesus asks the disciples who they think he is. Peter has a flash revelation of the truth, “You are the Christ”. Clearly he does not yet understand, else he would not need the further rebuke, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” (Mark 8:33 NIV)

If we dare to compare our understanding we too will fall short, as did those first disciples. Jesus spent three years living with, and teaching those disciples, and although he promised to build the Church on Peter, the rock, they were not ready. However Jesus did entrust them with the task because he promised them help “...But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the

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Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.....” (John 14:26 NRSV) If the early Church needed the Holy Spirit then we most certainly do.

Understanding can indeed come as we study the Bible, but we must make sure that we read it with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with complete trust in Him. We will then be welcomed into God’s rest as we allow Him to change our hearts, they must not remain hard. Let us start on the scriptures that refer to the Holy Spirit so that we might truly believe all the Bible teaches about Him, and come to know Him. For He is the real Gift to us bringing with Him the power that we so much want to see at work in the world. But understanding the teaching is not necessarily believing. We have to meditate on the passages, pray into them “hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them” as our Prayer Book would say. (collect for Advent 2)

This issue seems to be all about the Power of God. As I’ve said before I do not plan the magazine it just happens that a theme evolves. I trust however that we shall all gain some clearer picture of the Renewal that Jesus wants in His Church. Renewal is understood differently by various Christians and attempts to explain it seem to lead to more confusion rather than less. For me it means a “Normal Christian Life” * with the Holy Spirit being a major part of the scene. Jesus made it very clear that we needed Him, not just His help in running the Church. We need the power that Jesus manifested in the feeding of the five thousand and which Peter was offered as he was called to walk on the water.

So I am pleased that Paul Thompson has responded to Chris Webb’s article “Renewing Renewal” (issue 33), and I welcome the contribution by Lawrence Hoyle, the man behind the formation of ARM. Clearly God thought it necessary to give him a vision for the Anglican Church in Renewal. We in ARM(Wales) are still seeking to clarify our vision for the future but I believe God is speaking and our hearts must not be hardened. We also have excellent contributions from our vice-chairman Peter Bement and from Bob Pitcher and Roy Godwin, so may we hear God speak as we read on.

* “A Normal Christian Life” by Watchman Nee, is a study based on Paul’s letter to the Romans

Mary Newsom



A Message from our Vice Chairman Peter Bement

I always thank God for you ...

Will the church survive? The secular establishment's plan for us is that we will quietly fade away. It is a pity that many of the messages that come down from the hierarchy of the church are equally negative. They paint a gloomy picture of the church's future, posit its likely disappearance by the year 2030, and wonder how decline is to be managed. Undoubtedly, large parts of the Church in Wales are going to disappear in the near future, but this is change, not terminal decline: much will have to die if there is to be new life. In these circumstances, we need to learn again the kind of confidence in the church that we find in St Paul's letters to first century churches.

Paul almost invariably begins his letters with praise and thanksgiving to God for the church to which he writes - Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians (the only exception are the Galatians, in need of a stern talking to!). 'I always thank God for you ...'

Why? Because he sees each church as a miracle, an astonishing, wonderful work of God; and praises God that in the narrow, enclosed world of materialism that human beings make for themselves, there are places, little communities of believers, in which eyes are raised to the limitless grace and power of God, lives are changed, and people seek to live according to God's ways.

But he always goes on to remind them of how immense a resource is this grace and power that Christians have in Christ, and to urge them to live by God's purposes, to live out God's will and plan for them (e.g. Ephesians 1:15-19): this is who you are (thanks be to God), now be it, do it, live it. Each letter is different because each church is different: but the basic strategy is always to get people to understand who they are in Christ, and persuade them to enter in to the fullness of all God has done for them.

Paul's paean of praise that opens the letter to the Ephesians (1:3-14) springs from a sense of what it means to be in Christ, and the blessings that flow from him, lavish and unstinting, to raise us above the level of the commonplace, and imbue our lives with divine purpose; for these are blessings 'in the heavenly realms'.

Christians are

- chosen by God before time began to be holy & blameless in his sight;
- adopted as children of God;



- redeemed: our sins, which separated us from God, forgiven
- given insight into God's all-embracing purposes;
- made the people of God, a privilege now shared by both Jews and Gentiles;
- marked with the Holy Spirit, the seal guaranteeing that at the end of time, when Jesus comes in his Kingdom, we will receive our inheritance with the saints;
- called to live to the praise of God's glorious grace; so that praise itself becomes the fulfilment of the Christian's destiny in Christ.

Blessing past, present, & future, flowing from eternity. Could we learn to regard ourselves in this way? If we could, there would then be no need for us to think of the church as a decaying institution that urgently needs to be propped up. After all, these first century Christians to whom Paul writes were beleaguered minorities - but were growing into a world church! A confident church could ignore leaders who compromise with worldly ideas in the hope that the world might take some notice. Instead of clinging to the past, or contenting ourselves with the religious consumerism that seeks only nice spiritual experiences, we would hear the call to commitment, discipleship, witness: seeking to stand and grow and mature in Christ, to glorify God.

Paul's letters remind us that if we are 'in Christ' by faith, we can live with confidence, because God has great plans and purposes for us. Our churches are not meant to be little clubs for religious people, for our satisfaction, sustained by our efforts; but a refuge for sinners, part of God's unfolding, eternal plan of salvation in our time. Here, our preordained destiny 'to be holy and blameless in his sight' and to live 'to his praise and glory', is a real possibility; we can live lives that are worthy of the Gospel, and the church can be a sign of the Kingdom. Until the Lord comes again there will be future generations long after we have gone, discovering God's grace and power through his church. God will always have his church on earth until his purposes are accomplished: the question for us is whether it will be our church.

Paul says: 'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in [Jesus], the One he loves

Peter Bement



In defence of the Holy Spirit's 'Power' by Paul Thompson

In his article 'Renewing Renewal' (Issue 33), Chris Webb offered a "couple of guesses" as to what charismatic renewal might look like if it was itself to be renewed. He used as his starting point a conversation between Joseph of Panephris, one of the early church's 'desert fathers', and his disciple Lot, who on wondering how he could improve his spiritual life received the reply, "Lot, if you want to, you can become all fire". From the powerful symbolism and implications of this picture he acknowledges the contribution to the life of the church that charismatic renewal has made and goes on to wonder what the future might hold, making the point in passing that charismatic renewal can not stand still without becoming a "dead husk" rather than a "living tradition". He continues by making the point, that "the church community is designed for insiders, and is both hard to relate to and hard to break into" and to counter this problem he suggests that it might be possible to "address with more urgency how people can experience the life of Christ in the Spirit without coming to 'church' at all; how, by discovering Jesus in new contexts, they can find new expressions of Christian community, 'church for beginners'." Like Abraham, we are to risk everything "to follow the promise of the God who goes before us".

The problem he outlines for the church is a very real one and impossible to deny as we see, especially in Wales, the results of near unstoppable decline in church attendance accompanied with the closure of hundreds of churches and the general marginalisation of the church in an increasingly secular society. The church community does increasingly look as if it is only intended "for insiders" and much of the jargon and language we use does sound as if we are "speaking in tongues even when we're speaking English" or Welsh for that matter. It is also true that the need to find ways of "discovering Jesus in new contexts" is now urgent, although there is much disagreement about what that might mean in practice and whether or not it is entirely necessary to discover ways of experiencing "the life of Christ in the Spirit without coming to 'church' at all". Having said all of this, the difficulty I have with Chris's argument is the way he continues by suggesting that part of the problem is the use of the word 'power' in charismatic language and that maybe we should place "a little less of the spotlight on the glitzy and glamorous gifts of the Spirit, and a little more on the rather more plain but nutritious fruit of the Spirit."

The problem is that to dismiss the word 'power' in this way is in my view both dangerous and unbiblical. It is dangerous because it signals a return to the days when the Holy Spirit was seen as a largely inspirational but not very important – or powerful - person of the Trinity; and it is unbiblical because, at least in the Authorised Version of the Bible (the only version I have available on my computer), the word 'power' is a biblical word. It appears 260 times, of which 142 are in the New Testament, 37 in the Gospels and 56 in the Letters of Paul.

In the Gospels we read of the Son of Man who comes 'with power and great glory' (Mat.24.30), of the Kingdom of God which will 'come with power' (Mk.9.1) and of the 'power



of the Spirit' (Lk.4.14) that enables Jesus to return to Galilee. We also read that Jesus gives both power and authority to the twelve who are sent out two by two (Lk.9.1) and instructs them to wait to be 'clothed with power from on high' (Lk.24.49) as they wait for the Day of Pentecost. In his letters Paul describes how people are won for the gospel not just by what is said but also by 'the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit' (Romans 15.19, cf. also 1Thes.1.5), or by 'a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that ... faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power' (1 Cor 2.4b-5). But this is not power that has to do with having power over others, rather it is power to 'stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.' (Eph.6.11b-12). This is power that enables Paul in his weakness to recognise God saying 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor.12.9) and that is 'held in jars of clay to show that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us' (2 Cor.4.7) It is the power of God's Holy Spirit prompting Paul to encourage us to 'be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power!' (Eph.6.10)

We are called to follow the example of Jesus especially in regard to his character. He desired to serve others and showed this most powerfully in the washing of the disciple's feet on the night before he was betrayed (John 13.1-17). Yet even Jesus' crucifixion is a demonstration of power. Jesus lays down his life, not as an act of weakness, but as a powerful act of self-sacrifice. Choosing to live sacrificially for the benefit of others is not an act of weakness; anymore than giving your life in battle is an act of weakness, generally we see these actions as acts of self-sacrifice. Jesus chooses to lay down his life (John 10.18) and so sets a powerful example of self-sacrifice empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We are also called to follow the example of Jesus in regard to his ministry. When Jesus sent out the twelve [Lk.9.1-6) and the seventy-two (Lk 10.1-12), he gave them power and authority to do the work he was doing himself. In Acts 2 when Peter preaches to the crowd he demonstrates from Joel that the Holy Spirit is to be given in every generation so that by these wonders 'everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved' (Acts 2.16-21) Spiritual gifts are given so that we too might be able to continue the work of Jesus entrusted with power to the first Christians at Pentecost and down through the ages to us in our generation.

Thus the spiritual gifts of 1 Cor.12.4-11 are not less important than the spiritual fruit of Gal.5.22-26. The overall aim of the Spirit is to empower us to be like Jesus, in both His character and ministry, as we live out our calling to continue this ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph of Panephrisis' advice to Lot is exactly right, we really can 'become all fire' as we take Chris Webb's advice and 'long for God', for God will fill us with the power of His Pentecostal fire, so that empowered by the Holy Spirit we are able do all that Christ has commissioned us to do.



The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because.....by Bob Pitcher

It is widely thought, and I believe it, that when Jesus entered the world, he emptied himself of, what have become known as, his metaphysical attributes i.e. omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. (knowing everything, being all powerful and being everywhere at the same time.) Only vicars are expected to be omnipresent now! So when Jesus lived as a person he really did experience life as we do. How then was Jesus able to do miracles and know things supernaturally? The supernatural acts in his life came as a result of the outworking of the Holy Spirit within him. He was anointed by the Spirit and was dependent on the Spirit to perform the miracles of healing he did, and to prophesy and to raise the dead etc.. Therefore Jesus needed to pray and saw the signs he performed as answers to his prayer, by the power of the Spirit. In addition to this, Jesus said that he only did the things which he saw the Father doing. In other words he lived his life not by taking his own initiative but by living out his life in obedience to the Father's plans. So Jesus performed his earthly ministry in obedience to the Father and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Does that ring any bells? Of course it does, because it is exactly the same way which God has called us to minister and live our Christian lives. In order to be effective and truly disciples, each one of us is called to be obedient to the Father and to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now Jesus' life is our pattern. The same principles which operated in His life operate in ours. Hence we are called to follow him. That's what it means to be a disciple. At Jesus' baptism, the beginning of his earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit descended on him. Baptism is of course not only an act of cleansing, which Jesus didn't need, but an act of commitment of one's will to the will of the Father; a dying of our self-will and a rising to new life in obedience to the Father. In his baptism Jesus was publicly proclaiming this commitment and in response the Father sent the Holy Spirit upon him. Now he was almost ready to launch his ministry on the world, but first he needed to be tried in the wilderness in order to establish the way in which he was going to use this powerful anointing. The charismatic movement, I feel, stands at a pivotal moment. We too have stated our allegiance to the Father's will and he has in turn, caused the Holy Spirit to come on us and in us. We too are being faced with the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness but sadly we often give way to them which diverts us from his way and thus mars the calling and destiny on our corporate lives. So let's look at these temptations.

I. Matthew 4:3

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Here was the temptation for Jesus to use his power to answer his own needs. Recently I was in Lithuania at a conference of 'Faith and Light'. (an international organisation which provides fellowship and support for people with learning difficulties.) I was talking with one of the

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delegates from Poland and asked what their experience was of the 'Charismatic Movement' in the Catholic Church in Poland.

"Oh," she said, "I used to go to that, but I found that the meetings were continually all about me. My healing, my fulfilment, my blessing, my gifts. I wanted to belong to something which was not just about me but which gave me an opportunity to give God's love to others."

I think her response highlighted a real danger in charismatic circles. We can get so bound up with ourselves and see Christianity almost like a kind of spiritual therapy. Now, of course, God wants to heal us and bless us and give us fulfilment but he does these things in order that we might serve and be ambassadors for the Kingdom. So often at our conferences, for instance, the seminars on healing are packed to capacity but those dealing with some aspect of mission are under-attended. Wouldn't it be lovely if both sorts of seminar were packed. People getting healed for service and then finding out what God wants them to do. So we need to guard against a sort of spiritual self-centredness.

II. Matthew 4:5-6

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' "

Here was a temptation to do something dramatic, something to get noticed, something to promote the spectacular. Our world loves performers doesn't it. We have become obsessed in our papers and on the television with celebrities. There can be an unreported war in East Africa (and there is!) where millions are in danger but we must know what the Beckhams are doing! The 'Charismatic Movement' can be seen as a means of providing a platform for those who want to perform, those who want to be noticed. I have recently got the 'God' channel (on digital TV) and amongst the good stuff, there are some real performers. In many people there is a real need to be noticed, a need to find identity in being a spiritual somebody. We really need to guard against this because inevitably it brings glory to people rather than to God.

It is wonderful that in the Church in Wales, due to a number of crises, we at last have

to face the reality that, so-called, lay people will have to be equipped to minister. This is so exciting but we all must guard against this very real temptation to be performers, to find our identity in our ministry rather than in God.

III. Matthew 4:8-9

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour.



“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

One of the saddest problems in the African church is the widespread teaching that if individuals become faithful to God then He will bless them with material riches. Poor and vulnerable people are promised big houses, cars and bank balances if only they will believe enough. The God who will supply all my needs is replaced by the God who will supply all my wants. This demonstrates two other, very real temptations which the charismatic faces. One is the wrong exercise of power, the other is the longing for material riches. It is easy for the one with perceived power to manipulate and dominate. I grew up under the so called ‘heavy shepherding’ heresy, where peoples’ lives were totally dominated by their spiritual oversight. It all started with a genuine and good desire to make disciples but it ended in bondage and sometimes the formation of cults. This is an extreme example of charismatic manipulation but there are many other subtle manifestations of this phenomenon. I have seen people prophesy their own will into a situation in order to get their own way. I’ve seen them bring control into peoples’ lives because of so called insights. On the mountain Jesus was tempted with power. That’s a very real temptation for those of us who move under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of which one can see raising their heads in all sorts of places.

So after these temptations to misuse the power he had been given, what did Jesus decide to do? What decision did he come to? Well he tells us when he comes out of the wilderness and bursts in on a needy world in Nazareth.

Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

This why the Spirit of God came upon Jesus and it is why He has come upon us. Let us never settle for anything less.



LET US BECOME WHAT WE SAY WE ARE! By Lawrence Hoyle

We do not need to apologise for being Anglicans, we need to return to our origins.

LAWRENCE HOYLE served in several parishes as a traditional incumbent. Disillusioned by his apparent failure to make much impression, in 1970 he became Rector of Thwing, an isolated village on the Yorkshire Wolds. Following a deep experience of the Holy Spirit, the course of his life and ministry became dramatically changed. The story of how, with Margaret his wife, he was led to transform the huge, redundant Rectory into Lamplugh House, a centre for spiritual renewal, and where, ten years later, he was instrumental in the founding of Anglican Renewal Ministries is told in his book 'Over the Circumstances'. (Copies may be obtained from the author at the reduced price of £6.99) Email: lawrencehoyle@onetel.com

As Anglicans we are all concerned, bewildered and shaken by many things we see happening in our corner of the world-wide church of Jesus Christ. There is a concerted assault on traditional biblical faith, principles and morality, clearly seen to be coming as much from within the church as from outside. It is not new and in my understanding it is the result of many years of subtle satanic endeavour through unbelief, liberalism and the gradual undermining of Christian principles embedded in the institutions of our society; marriage, family life, education, sexual ethics, etc. The apparent success of this development is due to the general failure of the church to be true to major principles which, according to scripture, is a foremost purpose for its being. As Anglicans we need first to go back and examine our origins if we are successfully to carry out our mission.

We have received a Gospel that is intended to transform the world, but when the world is allowed to transform the Gospel, we are in grave danger. Must we remain helpless in this situation? I think not, and we need to recognise that we are engaged, not against flesh and blood, but a powerful spiritual enemy against whom we are offered spiritual weapons with which we can be victorious in this conflict. Thereby equipped we are enabled to contend for the extension of the Kingdom of God, a primary reason for our existence, and why we need the continuous replenishing of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Since my retirement from leading Anglican Renewal Ministries 15 years ago, there has been a change of scene. Charismatic Renewal, if not generally respectable, is now recognised as a legitimate expression of spirituality within the comprehensive-ness of Anglicanism; many bishops and a former Archbishop of Canterbury are seen to acknowledge that label. The problem with that situation however, is that renewal is generally seen as an optional extra, not a supreme essential to the life of the church. It makes me cringe when I hear people say that we have now 'moved on' from the early glory days of renewal: we have not, we have moved backwards, back to the days when for most people the Holy Spirit is but a 'ghost' in their experience.

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Whilst I can see in certain areas evidence of spirit-led life and witness, it is by no means general, and renewal teaching and encouragement appears at a low key, apart from some notable town and city parishes. A famous pioneer in renewal, the late David du Plessis used to say 'God has no grandchildren', and this is true; He has 'children' by adoption, which means that every generation must be converted in every way. Not everyone goes to New Wine, Spring Harvest, Flames of Fire or similar events, so that many people remain ignorant and unaffected and we see many churches with ageing, declining congregations indicative of a complacent celebration of the status quo. The church still needs renewal and to go on being constantly renewed by the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament, the question most asked of believers, was not "Are you saved?", "Are you converted?", "Are you catholic?", or "Are you evangelical?" – it was "Did you receive the Holy Spirit.....?" Ask that question of many Anglicans today and you will get a vacant, querulous look. It remains scripturally true that the 'fullness', 'baptism', 'empowering of the Holy Spirit' is not an optional extra for those with particular religious bumps on their heads, but it is for all Christians if they are to be the people of God, serving God's agenda.

The word of God promises that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail' against the rock of true faith, and it is true Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided faith that needs to be revived and renewed today. I believe it is time for more 'movers and shakers' on the renewal scene; people who will seek to inspire with enthusiasm and expectancy those who remain untouched, as it was in the days when it was all new and fresh, but now with the wisdom of the years, able to avoid many of the mistakes and pitfalls of the early days. I would like to see more local and area attempts to get the message through to clergy and their people together - this was an important aspect of the vision I was given for the role of Anglican Renewal Ministries in the first place. An account of how this vision was given appears in my book and it was several years in its development. I believe that God gave us a direction and a programme, and that agenda and programme need to be recovered. The call remains the same, and the need remains the same; unlike us God is not fickle and subject to the trendiness of worldly ways and philosophies, and I believe that God always calls us back again to where it all begins – the fundamental and unchanging basis of biblical faith – a call recently re-iterated by Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury.

It is my firm belief that God has not written off our church and it can become again His lamp-stand to give light to the nation. In spite of today's problems it remains such, and God requires us to turn to Him in penitence and obedience; to forsake human plans and good ideas; and instead to seek His agenda, and trust Him for the new life, authority and spirit that we need for God's purpose to be fulfilled.

What do I mean when I plead for us to return to our origins? Let me put it this way: we are a church firmly grounded on scripture; Anglican formularies, the 39 Articles and the Book of Common Prayer and its updates, describe a very good blueprint for an effective church. On paper it seems we have everything needful – a wonderful balance of tradition and authority,

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freedom and dignity, order and spontaneity, word and sacrament. Thus described it looks an admirable formula for our worship and witness, but unfortunately we seem for the most part to be lacking the power of the Holy Spirit so that it may operate as intended. It is all there, it is all inherent in what we say we believe. Terry Fulham, the renowned American preacher and teacher, who led his parish at Darien, Connecticut, into remarkable renewal, said of our origins, 'The Anglican vine needs no graftings, it is quite capable of bringing forth God's fruit' – when it is truly open to the Holy Spirit.

Sunday by Sunday in our worship, we affirm our belief in 'the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life' – but I wonder how much do we recognise that the Spirit also brings death to that which is not of God and does not conform to His will? The fact is, we could be cultivating and defending all sorts of things that are not of God and because they are not, no amount of prayerful tending will bring life into them. 'All flesh is as grass; the flower fades and the grass withers when the Spirit of the Lord blows across it'. As well as life, there is much evidence of death in our church today: ought we not to set about identifying it so that it can be buried, because no amount of artificial respiration will revive it. Then we can concentrate on those things that are true and honest and of the Lord. – because that is where God is strengthening and refreshing those aspects of church life and tradition that are indeed in harmony with His will and purpose.

We also constantly affirm that we 'believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' – the word Apostolic is determinative of the meaning of the other three definitions. It is in the apostolic area that we seem largely deficient, for it is not about Apostolic Succession (a favoured Anglican theme), but about apostolic success – a commodity not all that much in evidence. It is apostolic experience that is missing and this is why the church needs renewal; the continuous infilling, guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

Clearly the question "Did you receive the Holy Spirit?" is the one which needs to be addressed again to the people in the pews, unfortunately there are also many clergy to whom it needs to be put. The challenge of the Holy Spirit seems to have been diminished, so that the tide of renewal seen in past years has evidently receded.

When speaking of renewal there seems to be an easy assumption that it is understood and widely in place, against all the evidence. The Alpha course is a God-given tool for the church and it is widely in use. Periodically we get supplements in the church press witnessing to its success for thousands of people world-wide, and praise to God for that. But in the United Kingdom, at least, I believe many clergy are by-passing the essential element of Alpha, and that is the teaching and receiving of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A.R.M.'s original 'Saints Alive!' course, similar in many respects to the Alpha course, was hugely successful, but only when Chapter Six was not watered down and thus made ineffective. Clergy and pastors can still remain 'The cork in the bottle' where the prerequisites of renewal are concerned. Indeed let us get back to basics!



Ffald-y-Brenin walking in Renewal today by Roy Godwin

In the last edition of this magazine I wrote concerning the move of God's Spirit here at Ffald-y-Brenin. I am pleased to inform you that since then things have accelerated. God is continuing to pour out His Spirit amongst our guests, changing lives, releasing gifts, ministries, healing and deliverance, all through His manifest presence without human ministry.

Now I would like to share with you some of the lessons we have learned on the way.

Lesson 1. Check your foundations.

Are you fed up with the status quo? Are you tired of battling against the same temptations, the same weaknesses, the same strongholds and powers again and again?

In our early days at Ffald-y-Brenin we found ourselves on a treadmill of warfare. We would seem to win the victory only to lose it again. Then the battle would recommence and on we'd go in the cycle. There came a (sensible) point when we rebelled against this pattern and cried out to God "Enough" ! For me, it meant:

a) laying down my experience within renewal and telling God that it was He who was the fount of wisdom, not me, and we needed His wisdom, not mine!

and b) I had to acknowledge that I didn't know how to pray.

Out of weakness came strength. He showed us a different way of praying for His blessing, and then blessed us with an awesome display of grace. At the very moment we won victory in the heavenlies, the old springs on our hillside that had been dry for a century suddenly started flowing again!

Summary. Refuse to accept patterns of failure. Choose to live according to Kingdom vision and principles. Lay down your strength and acknowledge weakness and look to God, not human wisdom, for vision, answers and methods.

Lesson 2. Remember past renewal.

Have you experienced renewal in times past? Do you hunger for those days to be reawakened? Are you frustrated by church life today?

Over the last couple of years God's blessing had generally encouraged us. However, one morning in our Chapel Prayers I was struck by the Psalmist's words; how he was troubled as he remembered the former days, the years of long ago, of songs in the night (Ps 77). Something stirred in me and I began to cry out that the experiences of renewal in my past might be renewed. And, just like that, He answered. (But He had to remind me that the

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experience of the past and the methods of the past are two separate issues.) As I began to pray more in tongues, the freshness of renewal returned, and the sense of His manifest presence began to increase.

Summary. The experiences of renewal in your past can act as a stimulus towards renewal in the present. Leave the old methods behind and look for today's bread. Remember the acts of God in your past. Stir up the Spirit within you and start to use what you still have.

Lesson 3. Leave your past failures behind.

Have you made mistakes in the past? Mishandled renewal? Fallen into sin? Linked in with the wrong people? Do you think that you have become "unusable"?

If that were true, God wouldn't have been able to work with the biblical figures (Moses the murderer, David the adulterer etc) – or with me.

The gospel – good news – is that God draws you into fellowship and ministry because of His grace, not because of your goodness.

Summary. Lay your past down at the Cross. Relinquish the pain. Learn lessons. Make restitution where possible. Then walk forward into a new start. You can be liberated from your past and be renewed again.

Lesson 4. Small is beautiful.

Would you like to see your local church flowing in renewal? Do you long for revival to sweep across this land? If so, you are catching the Father's heart.

But do you despair of actually seeing movement in your church?

Do you realise that if you personally walk in renewal, renewal has come to your church? That if you, personally, are revived, revival has come to Wales? That if you draw one other person into fellowship, there is a renewed, revived community functioning in your area? What is happening at little Ffald-y-Brenin is now affecting its local community and nations.

Summary. Act small: pray big. Start by bringing yourself back into renewal, without forgetting to pray for your local church and for Wales.

Lesson 5. God is still good and faithful.

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Prov.13:12). It is easy to think that wonderful experiences of renewal in the past are lost forever; that we are short of resources; that renewal is not so relevant in the post-modern 21st Century.



God, of course, has provided Jesus as the deepest and most relevant “word” to every person around us. Receptivity and style may be influenced by culture, but the Holy Spirit can pierce through all of that. The promises of God are still “Yes” and “Amen” in Jesus (2 Cor.1:20.) We have been amazed as the manifest presence of God has consistently fallen on visitors of all ages, and the Holy Spirit has brought revelation and healing to them direct from the Father.

Summary. Regain faith in God and His promises. Share His presence with others rather than His story; instead of telling people about him, pray with them.

And finally, it’s all about Him, not us. Our eyes are on Him. Jesus. The Life-giver. The Glorious One. The Renewer. We just respond to Him. By praying and worshipping. By loving Him first and then those around us. By living lives that offer a worthy reflection of His grace.

The Use of the Web in the 21st Century by Mary Newsom

Some encouragement and help, for our churches to consider modern methods and technology.

We have two web sites, one specifically to promote Flames of Fire and the other our A.R.M.(Wales) site, into which I put the magazine, some pages to identify us and a few items which I hope will encourage others to draw closer to God (see Streams of Living Water). But there is a lot of empty space on both sites and I would like to make use of it.

We get a few visitors from remote parts of the world and I wonder what they got out of the visit. They may have arrived on our site as a result of searching for something about God, prayer perhaps, but very often the search was for something I didn’t expect and they probably didn’t stay. But how should we be using the web? Like it or not it is here to stay and a great influence on our lives today. Young people are encouraged to use it in their studies and will exploit it much more than most us have thought about. We have a responsibility to know what it will do and the effect it will have on our children and on our churches.

Web evangelism is becoming important and we must not dismiss modern technology and what it can do. But, and this is important, it can be misused in a number of ways. We must make ourselves aware of the pitfalls as well as the benefits.

Different ways of communicating the gospel have been used in every century. In medieval times pictures were essential because many could not read and few books were available. Then books increased in popularity and we are now spoilt for choice with available books. Today we also have many excellent courses like ‘Alpha’, ‘Saints Alive’ and ‘Emmaus’ but are they touching those who have never heard the Good News of Jesus? To be successful in evangelism

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there has to be contact with Christians keen to spend time with people and share their experiences.

How willing are you to become an evangelist? Would you know how to start? Have you got the necessary skills and are you willing to learn? Some young people today are showing an enthusiasm for the Lord that was unusual when we were young and they are also web-literate. Chat rooms are popular and are to be found covering any interest you might think of. Christian chat rooms exist along with the rest and that is one of the first things we should think about. Whether or not we set up a chat room on our church web-site our young Christians are going to find their way to one. For those who know nothing of the web, a chat room is a place where anyone can visit and join in the conversation by typing in messages. What are they saying to their 'unknown' friends? We might like to consider how young people can learn to express Christian doctrine in this environment. The need to be loving and caring, the need not to argue and be 'ruthlessly dogmatic' when you cannot see the people you are 'talking' to. The church has always 'turned people off' through lack of thought and that immediately alerts us to a danger. But another danger is that people are not always who they appear to be, and allowing young people to evangelise through chat rooms could put them at risk.

There are lots more things to consider, language for instance. Christians use jargon all the time, but it is useless when speaking to non-Christians. There is need to be simple in expression, need to understand where someone else is coming from, what previous knowledge they have, what their cultural background is, where they live etc. Some too, are hungry to know more about Christianity, others want to know if it offers anything different from another faith.

Apparently China, after America, is the second biggest user of the web. Chinese Christians are hungry for Christian teaching. I doubt if your church web-site will appeal to the Chinese but it could be a means of promoting the gospel to people in your locality. But you need to know where to find the resources, which Christian web-sites to recommend, where to find on-line Bibles etc.

Most Christian sites are written for Christians, and non-Christians will not stay. So if you consider writing an evangelism section for your site you have a lot of study to do. It is much more than learning how to write web-pages. But those with strong Christian youth groups could really take this on, Because most young people like using their computers, here is an opportunity that needs to be looked at. There are lots of ways of internet feedback besides the chat room. Bulletin boards and forums give more control than an unmonitored chat room. They are going to be used more and more and we should be involved now.

But there is a lot of help out there. I have integrated pages from www.gospelcom.net into our site as a resource for our churches. You can read the what, why and how for yourselves (link below - bookmark it to study off-line). The material is very thorough and written by Soon Ministries and freely given away. This same material is to be found on a number of sites including www.evangelism.uk.net ([note this and the other links quoted in this paragraph are no](#)

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longer available (Feb 2014)) which is a site maintained by the Church of England's Division of Mission and Public Affairs.

Other helpful material can be found on the net and for some less developed countries it will be much more accessible than books. Soon Ministries are a site worth looking at www.soon.org. I will in time produce a list of what I have found useful, at the moment there is much to absorb and appreciate.