

# Christian cults, sects and aberrant movements

## Introduction

### Sect

The word 'sect' refers to a smaller group that broke away from a larger group and has different doctrines and practices. The word derives from the Middle English, from Old French *secte* or Latin *secta*, literally meaning 'following', hence 'faction', 'party', from the stem of *sequi* 'follow'. Christianity has very many sects or sectarian movements.

### Cult

A cult is worse than a sect. It is by nature sectarian but it has negative features, which are variously listed by different commentators. The Oxford Dictionary definition is:  *veneration and devotion directed towards a particular figure or object; a relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or sinister; a misplaced or excessive admiration for a particular person or thing.*

Cults are famously easy to get into but difficult to get out of. They usually feature an authoritarian leader that the group is devoted to who wields despotic power over his followers. This authority can be severe (e.g. Scientology) or more benign, but in both cases the will of the members is submitted to the leader and independent thinking is discouraged or disallowed. Most cults result (either deliberately or accidentally) in members distancing themselves from previous friends and family and often employment. It is common to find fanatical loyalty to the cult until something breaks the spell (such as a scandal or revealed truth) and then the leaving member has great difficulty recovering from years of delusion.

### Analysis of cults and sects

There are many books that analyse various religions, cults and sects, which vary in quality. Studying this subject is helpful, and quite important, if we wish to understand the uniqueness of Christ and the beauty of salvation. They are also necessary in order to give an intelligent defence of the Christian position and warn people of the dangers of these sects.

Now in this busy age many believers simply do not have time to read lengthy books on the various religions; indeed, they are also confused as to which would be the best book to get to do this. There are shorter, simpler books but these tend to be superficial and are often from an un-Reformed foundation; such books could actually do some damage.

In this work I intend to avoid both problems. I want to give accurate and useful information for initial research, but I want to do this in the most concise manner possible. Thus my intention is to summarise every appropriate 'Christian' cult and sect but do so concisely. While this is a tall order, I believe that such a work would be of immense value to Christians. As a result of this approach I cannot refute all the points made by the various groups, as this would require extensive pages.

There are multiple sects / cults / churches claiming to be 'Christian' that are far from it. These are heretical institutions that distort Biblical doctrine and introduce aberrant practices.

In summary:

Sects are groups that split off from an established, historic, institutional church and are usually guilty of sectarianism and wrongful schism. Cults are groups that may or may not have split off from a church but are worse than sects. These have multiple and varied characteristics but key elements are:

- Usually focused upon a single authoritarian leader or a doctrine.
- Often involves brainwashing.
- Demands absolute commitment.
- Are easy to get in but hard to get out of.
- Usually, but not always, replace Scripture with some other sacred text, often the words of the leader. If the Bible is the sole claimed authority, it often transpires that a cult leader's teaching really becomes the authority in practice.
- Only those in the cult are saved (elitism).

Other features sometimes include:

- The rule of apostles and/or prophets.
- Enforced tithing that must go to the church.
- Communal living or communal ownership of possessions.
- Giving over your wealth to the church.
- Claims of supernatural power present in this group alone.
- An intense discipling process.
- Expectation of imminent global revival or the end of days.

# Contents

- Anglo-Israelism, British Israelism.
- Apostolic Church.
- Assemblies of God.
- Bethel Church.
- Bible Pattern Church Fellowship.
- Branhamism.
- Campbellites.
- Children of God [The Family of Love, Heaven's Magic].
- The Charismatic Movement.
- Christadelphians.
- Christian Science / Church of Christ Scientist.
- Church of God of Prophecy.
- Darwin Fish.
- Divine Science.
- Elim churches.
- The Emerging Church.
- Gene Edwards.
- Gnosticism.
- The Higher Life Movement (Also Keswick Movement, Victorious Life or Abundant Life.).
- The Holiness Movement.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Jesus Army.
- Latter Rain Movement.
- Manifest Sons of God.
- Messianic Christianity: late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards.
- Methodism.
- Mormonism.
- New Thought.
- New Apostolic Reformation.
- New Calvinism.
- Noahidism.
- Oneness Pentecostalism.
- Pentecostalism.
- The Brethren (originally 'Plymouth Brethren').
- Quakers [the Religious Society of Friends].
- PP Quimby.
- Religious Science.
- Restorationism (American).
- Restorationism (British) aka New Churches.
- Rhema churches.

- Roman Catholicism.
- Salvation Army.
- Seeker-sensitive churches.
- Seventh Day Adventism.
- The Shouters.
- Signs and Wonders Movement (S&W).
- Swedenborgianism / The New Church / Church of the New Jerusalem.
- Unification church [Moonies].
- Unitarians, Unitarian Church.
- Unity School.
- (The) Way International.
- Westboro Baptist Church.
- Word of Faith.
- Worldwide Church of God (Armstrongism).
- Appendix One: Doctrinal summary.
- Appendix Two: Warning signs.
- Appendix Three: Occult Roots.
- Appendix Four: Occult examples in modern churches.
- Appendix Five: Biblical analysis of spiritual gifts.

## Sects outlined

### **Anglo-Israelism, British Israelism**

This is the belief that British people (traditionally stated to be Anglo-Saxon people, though this is a confused term for the separate Angles<sup>1</sup> and Saxons<sup>2</sup>) are the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. There are groups in America who believe that they are the extension of this principle by migration from Britain.

The theory was first proposed by John Sadler in 1649 (*Rights of the Kingdom*) and then developed by the Richard brothers [1757-1824]. The modern form dates from John Wilson *Our Israelitish Origin* (1840). The first Anglo-Saxon Association was founded in 1879. The doctrinal systems of various groups differ. The basic idea is founded on legends about Zedekiah's daughters (Jer 41:10) who escaped Egypt and sailed to Ireland and later became the royal line of England. Some claim that the Pilgrim Fathers belonged to the tribe of Menasseh.

There are different forms of this amongst different groups including: The Worldwide Church of God, The I Am Ascended Masters, Identity movements etc.

The root problem of this group is failing to see that although the physical seed of David failed, the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant is spiritual and in Christ. Christ is the promised king; the fleshly line profits nothing.

### **Apostolic Church**

A minority British Pentecostal church established in 1916 by brothers Daniel Powell Williams and William Jones Williams who were converted in the Welsh Revival (1904-5). They were early on associated with the Apostolic Faith Church founded by WO Hutchinson in Bournemouth in 1908. DP Williams became a minister in 1911 and then an apostle in 1913; however a disagreement led most of the Welsh assemblies to separate in 1915.

The Burning Bush Assembly of Andrew Turnbull of Glasgow joined them in 1918 bringing a number of Scottish churches. In 1922 Frank Hodges of Hereford brought his assembly then in 1924 HV Chanter of Bradford added a group of churches. A headquarters was established at Penygroes, Camarthen in Wales with D Williams as chief apostle and WJ Williams as prophet. Missionary headquarters were established at Bradford and financial offices in Glasgow. An annual conference was set up in Penygroes every August in a hall holding 3,000. A Bible school was also established in 1936 and a constitution in 1937.

There was significant growth in the 1930s but these folk tend to keep apart from other churches. It has been declining since the 1940s and most British Christians know nothing about it.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting in that it anticipated much of the 1970s Restoration Movement which was initially centred in Bradford by Welshman Bryn Jones and his brother Keri.

For general Pentecostal issues see entry on 'Pentecostalism'.

In addition, more specific errors of this movement include:

- Rule of church by apostles and prophets.

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<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants of what is now Schleswig-Holstein, who came to England in the 5th century AD.

<sup>2</sup> Germanic tribes from their homelands on the Danish peninsula who engaged in piracy on the North Sea and English Channel between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. They appear to have entered Britain, together with Angles and Jutes as mercenaries in the late period of the Roman occupation.

<sup>3</sup> I only ever met one person brought up in it; this person is not a believer.

- Believers can fall away.
- Tithes to the church are obligatory.

### **Assemblies of God**

This is the largest and strongest Pentecostal denomination which formed in 1914 to establish a nationwide Pentecostal movement in America. It was not founded on a Methodist view of holiness. Roots and early influences include Parham's Topeka Apostolic Faith movement, Elim ministries in Rochester, New York, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Dowie's Zion City, and other local works.

The early pioneers included Eudorus Bell, Howard Goss, Daniel Opperman, Archibald Collins and Mack Pinson who, in 1913, were concerned to repudiate unseemly doctrines and practices expressed in other Pentecostal works and called for a general council, to lukewarm effect. A loosely conceived agency resulted in Hot Springs and a headquarters in Findlay, Ohio, thence St Louis.

Immediately divergent views began to appear, such as restorationist ideas or anti-Trinitarian views. After trying to promote harmony, a council in 1916 expelled advocates of the 'New Issue', particularly preserving an orthodox view of the Trinity and establishing a doctrinal statement, with further clarification later.

Problems then arose about sanctification, with many leaders accepting the views of William Durham that penitent sinners received Christ's pardon and cleansing at conversion and should then overcome. This countered the prevalent Holiness view of many early Pentecostals that a second blessing, crisis experience secured sanctification (a Wesleyan doctrine). The AOG tried to embrace people with opposing views.

Then FF Bosworth resigned in 1918 in a disagreement about tongues as initial evidence of Spirit baptism. Bosworth opposed this but the AOG strongly supported it.

A weekly paper was issued in 1918, 'The Pentecostal Evangel', which today has a circulation of 275,000. After several editors, Englishman Stanley H Frodsham became editor of the paper and books (The Gospel Publishing House), serving until 1949.

After various leaders the AOG adopted a constitution and bylaws and the chairman became general superintendent in the late 1920s. A missionary programme was adopted. With multiple untrained ministers, the AOG established a Bible school in 1920 in Nebraska, but it closed in 1921. Another one was started in Springfield, Missouri in 1921 where the HQ had relocated to in 1918; others followed later.

Debates arose about women's ministry. Initially they demanded that women had no authority over men but many female members had previously held various ministries in other works. These ministries were recognised but women had no vote in the council until 1920. Full ordination of women was allowed in 1933. However, the Pentecostal Evangel was opposed to women's leadership and few women sought ordination while none attained national office. The constitution also emphasised male leadership doctrinally.

The AOG remained fairly isolationist during the 1930s but began to interact with evangelical churches in the 1940s. In the late 40s it had to deal with the rise of Latter Rain teaching, which it finally outlawed in 1949. There were also tensions between the AOG and the 40s healing evangelists (Branham, Oral Roberts, AA Allen, Jack Coe) despite AOG minister Gordon Lindsay's support and publishing of them ('Voice of Healing' magazine).

In the 1950s the healing ministries became independent and more radical revivalists (see the movie 'Elmer Gantry'). Gradually their influence on AOG members dissipated.

AOG pastor David J du Plessis began to have an influence on evangelical institutions. Gradually he had inroads into Catholic and Protestant churches worldwide but this led to tension in the AOG and he resigned in 1962. Du Plessis continued to be influential in the Charismatic Movement (CM). The CM began to have an influence on AOG churches, such as changing their worship style and individual AOG churches welcoming the ministry of du Plessis. In 1980 du Plessis was again ordained in the AOG.

When growth diminished in the 1970s, the AOG tried various church growth programmes and closer alliances with evangelicals. By 1982 the denomination became one of the fastest growing church movements in America. Its popularity was at odds with its earlier history of isolationism. In later years, growth slowed down but the denomination is still large.

For doctrinal issues see article on 'Pentecostalism'.

### **Bethel Church**

The church and denomination of Bill Johnson based in Redding, California. Johnson is viewed as an apostle with another leader acting as a prophet.

This is a Word of Faith, New Apostolic Reformation type of denomination; see under those entries for doctrinal details and criticism.

Johnson is a serious heretic and a very dangerous individual. He preaches wildly erroneous doctrines and methods resulting in overt occultism in his meetings, with people moaning, screaming, writhing on the floor falling over etc. It is an encapsulation of the Toronto Blessing excesses. Whistleblowers have testified to the use of fake healings and miracles and the use of New Age techniques. There is even a Supernatural Ministry School, members of which have used 'Destiny Cards', similar to occult Tarot Cards produced by *Christalignment*, where divination 'cold readings' are given to outsiders in New Age psychic fairs where Jesus is not mentioned.

Johnson is especially dangerous as he has a global vision for 'revival' involving an organised strategy for replicating and multiplying his church model world wide.

### **Bible Pattern Church Fellowship**

This was the breakaway church established by George Jeffreys after leaving Elim. It resulted from his struggle to understand what the Biblical structure of a local church should be and being dissatisfied with the organisation of Elim. Resistance from the ministerial council to his constant organisational changes led to his resignation in 1939. He founded the Bible Pattern Church in Nottingham in 1940.

It was a congregational type of church and at the start there were tensions between it and Elim churches. As George's health deteriorated his campaigns were not as successful as his earlier extraordinary efforts for Elim and so the work did not grow. For ten years George had been the greatest British evangelist since Whitefield.

This movement never gained the traction that Elim has and congregations were comparatively few. They still have congregations, but few and far between. There is not even a Wikipedia entry for this church.

George Jeffreys was a believer in British Israelism.

## **Branhamism**

[See 'Manifest Sons of God' and 'Latter Rain'.]

'Branhamism', as a formal term, is little known in Britain but is common in America. Britons who follow the heresies of Branham tend to absorb them anonymously in following radical Charismatic doctrines, such as Latter Rain and Manifest Sons of God theology.

William Marrion Branham [1909-1965] was an American Pentecostal 'prophet' who claimed to have the spirit of Elijah in this Laodecian Age [based on a Dispensational interpretation of Rev 2-3; other prophets spoke to other ages] thus he equated himself with Paul or Moses. His father was a bootlegger and he was raised in a poor secular home. Branham claimed that God first spoke to him when he was seven. He was 'converted' through a Baptist preacher and he felt called to preach. In 1933 he conducted his first church service in a tent preaching to 3,000 people.

In 1937 his wife and daughter died, which Branham interpreted as judgment for failing to join the Oneness Pentecostals. In 1946 he claimed to have met an angel in a cave and was given the power of prescience. His 'angel' inspired his healing ministry afterwards. He began to conduct healing services in revivals in a mystical fashion, which were attended by thousands, and he began to travel widely including many foreign countries. In South Africa there were claims of many miracles.

Branham ministered in Oneness circles and Trinitarian Pentecostal churches by tailoring his speeches carefully. He generally emphasised prosperity, healing and power. In 1965 he was killed in a car accident. Some followers expected him to be resurrected while others built a shrine to him at his grave.

He was the main proponent of healing and deliverance through laying on of hands and using the word of knowledge and is supposed to have raised the dead (though two former disciples claimed he was a fraud). He was widely supported, e.g. by The FGBF (Demos Shakarian), Oral Roberts; George Warnock, AA Allen, while Ern Baxter was once his associate (until he left out of disgust). The Kansas City Prophets and Paul Cain described him as the greatest prophet in history. However, his occult notions barred him from many Pentecostal churches who accused him of heresy. Many people died after he declared them healed. One former associate called him a practitioner of witchcraft.

### *Errors*

- He denied the Trinity saying it '*was of the devil*'.
- God is one essence expressed in various modes (modalism, Sabellianism).
- God took on human form as Jesus.
- After Jesus' ascension, God manifested the form of the Holy Spirit.
- Because God is one, baptism must be in the name of Jesus only. Baptised Christians must be rebaptised.
- Eve had sexual relations with the serpent producing some men as the serpent's seed predestined to hell. This is an occult and Satanist idea. He also blamed women for evil in the world and was an extreme misogynist, saying that '*women are not worth a good clean bullet*'.
- Those born of the seed of God, not corrupted by Eve, are heirs of eternal life.
- Hell is not eternal torment but will be done away with by God.
- He equated the Bible with the Pyramids and astrology.



- Elitism: only those who follow Branham's teachings are righteous. His followers were '*the Seed of God*'.
- Elitism: all institutional churches are apostate and of the devil. Those within such churches will be saved if they undergo a purgatorial suffering in the Great Tribulation.
- Branham believed that he was the promised Elijah of Mal 4:5 sent to herald the end.
- He also claimed to be the angel of Rev 3:14 and 10:7.
- He healed by clairvoyancy or channelling (via 'his angel') who gave him the word of knowledge and he always obeyed this 'angel' whom he disassociated from the Holy Spirit. He once met an occultist whom he said looked exactly like his 'angel'.
- Some of Branham's followers taught that he was born of a virgin.

Branham is clearly a very extreme heretic. It matters little if he had power to see people's illnesses or not; if it was real it was not of God because he taught lies and denied God. However, one of his co-workers wrote a book exposing him as a fraud. It is shocking that very many Charismatics regard Branham as a true prophet, but Branham inspires many of the current practices and ideas in Charismania.

### **Campbellites**

The Campbellites belong to a group known in America as Restorationists (in Britain this refers to something else).<sup>4</sup> These were reformists seeking to get rid of the established churches with their formalism and errors and replace them with a more primitive church following the doctrine and practices of the early church. The problem was that each group had different views as to what this was and just introduced more schism and heresies.

It refers to the church movements, The Disciples of Christ and The Churches of Christ. One of the founders of this movement was Alexander Campbell [1788-1866], who co-founded the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ. He is not to be confused with his father Thomas Campbell who also co-founded the Disciples Of Christ.

#### *The Disciples of Christ*

Alexander's father had emigrated to Pennsylvania from Scotland in 1807 where he founded a Christian association. Alexander also emigrated to America after university and joined his father's association, becoming an ordained minister in 1812.

He was interested in Christian unity and preached extensively in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia and Tennessee. Despite his views on unity, several congregations split off from the Baptists due to his teaching, which joined the Disciples of Christ ('Campbellites').

He was opposed to speculative theology as well as revivalist emotionalism in seeking a return to the simpler theology of the early church. He founded Bethany College to train ministers in 1840 and engaged in numerous debates with other church leaders. He also wrote many volumes.

#### *The Churches of Christ USA*

The Churches of Christ in the US share a common heritage with the Disciples of Christ, their history is the same between 1832 and 1906. In 1824 Alexander Campbell met Presbyterian minister Barton Stone to find that they shared many beliefs. In 1832 they joined their groups together to form the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), seeking to closely emulate the practice in the Book of Acts. In 1849 they formed a missionary society.

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<sup>4</sup> The original Harvestime groups and Restoration magazine contributors (inc. Terry Virgo) plus the New Churches (such as Pioneer People, inc. Gerald Coates).

The use of organ music in church started a division and the census of 1906 listed the Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ separately. The division was based on practice more than doctrine.

### *Doctrines*

- Seeking to emulate early Christian church teaching and practice (a good thing).
- Separatism.
- Baptism and confession of Jesus are the only requirements of a Christian (ignoring huge amounts of apostolic teaching).
- Baptism by immersion.

Modern Churches of Christ in the US have developed more serious heresies:

- Elitism: only members of the Church of Christ are saved.
- They deny the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation.
- They deny perseverance; no one is truly saved in this life. Regeneration only occurs after the resurrection of the body at the end. Baptism brings one hope of salvation but not actual salvation. Thus there is also no assurance, '*save us in heaven*'. Current salvation only means being saved from past sins; one can sin again and lose salvation.

### *Churches of Christ UK*

To make matters even more confusing, there was a movement called the Churches of Christ (also called 'Disciples') in Britain which began as a sporadic reform movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by Baptists, Glasites, Haldanites and Sandemanians. The first church was established in Ireland in 1804; the second in Scotland in 1807. They were officially organised in 1842 with five congregations and 1,300 members. A formal training college in Birmingham was established in 1920 and missions were set up in India and Africa.

It is a member of the World Council of churches and latest figures show 119 congregations with 7,000 members.

Since 1825 they maintained contact with the Churches of Christ in the USA, receiving resources from them in recent years.

### Doctrine and practice

- Weekly breaking of bread.
- Believer's baptism.
- Congregational government. These are all Biblical doctrines.
- Women can be ordained as deacons and elders. This is not.

These church groups are not wildly heretical but are sects from mainstream Christian churches. They also reflect this in the sectarianism of the members, which comes close to elitism. In reality they are a tiny, obscure group. I only ever knew of one Church of Christ meeting place in Brighton,<sup>5</sup> but this closed down in recent decades.

### **Children of God [The Family of Love, Heaven's Magic]**

This is a modern cult that developed out of the *Jesus People* revival in America in the early 1970s, beginning in California in 1972. It was initially led by David 'Moses' Brandt Berg [b.

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<sup>5</sup> It had a building in Oxford Street but I never saw anyone in there, despite working opposite it for some years in the 1970s and travelling down this road frequently.

1919; also called 'Aquarius']. Berg worked originally as an evangelist for the Christian and Missionary Alliance but was expelled for communistic ideas about wealth.

After working for Teen Challenge in 1968 in California, he gained a following with Hippies. 70 of these became his disciples that formed the basis of the Children of God, which were formed into communes. After Berg took a woman in addition to his wife, morality in the movement declined, which Berg excused in various circulated letters ('Mo Letters').

There were multiple allegations of kidnapping as parents sought to rescue deluded teenagers, plus charges of tax-evasion, soliciting of funds and brainwashing.<sup>6</sup> Berg led his people into Europe and by 1977 he had established 800 colonies. In the late 70s the cult was renamed as the Family of Love with a hierarchical structure with Berg heading 'The Royal Family'. In 1978 the group was reorganised placing Berg in total command; many members left including some of Berg's family. In 1977 there were 7,500 members with only 500 in America. In 1980 Berg relinquished authority to the Royal Family but led from behind the scenes.

There are about 13,000 members today with the headquarters based in Zurich; the US base is in Chicago.

In 1984 Berg's daughter Deborah Davis published an expose called '*The Children of God: The inside story*'; other critiques followed. Through these, outsiders learned the truth about what Berg had been teaching.

Despite criticisms and legal problems, the group continues to this day, mainly based in South America and the Philippines where even the military was infiltrated through sexual favours.

Berg's doctrines included licentiousness; e.g. girls were told to use sex to attract people into the cult ('flirty-fishing') or for payment. This 'sanctified prostitution' led to abundant finances. Vulnerable people were 'love bombed' (showered with compassion) so that they were drawn into the cult. There were bacchanalias with days of wine, group sex, erotic dances and debauchery. Like other cults, resources (books, magazines, tapes, CDs, videos) are sold for profit and no tax paid. Berg continues to publish his letters. Berg also speculates as a false prophet. Despite failed prophecies (such as California falling into the sea or comet Kohoutek destroying America), his followers continue to support him even when his prophecy of the Second Coming in 1993 failed.

### *Errors*

- The Bible is God's word for yesterday; today one needs new revelation, i.e. from Berg.
- Denial of the Trinity.
- Wrong views of Jesus; including foul suggestions about his life. Has said that Jesus was created by a sexual act. There is great confusion of the two natures of Christ.
- The Spirit is the 'love principle' and not a personal being. It is the feminine aspect of God, the 'Queen of Love'.
- Elitists. Only the Children of God are the true church.
- Occultism. Berg believed he could communicate with the dead and followed Jean Dixon.

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<sup>6</sup> I knew one victim of this in about 1972. Eventually his parents managed to get him out but he lost all his goods, including a new car. He was a psychological mess and never regained his composure, despite being gifted. Another person, who got saved just before me, joined and is still in the movement, which psychologically damaged his brother, whom I once pastored.

- Reincarnation.
- No hell. The Lake of Fire is a place of cleansing, except for Satan.
- Licentiousness, hedonism, sexual perversions. Homosexuality. Incest. Paedophilia.
- Communistic in practice (shared commune living).
- Many charges of abuse and brainwashing.
- Revolutionary ideas; anti-establishmentism.

This has nothing to do with Christianity whatsoever. It is an apostate, licentious sex-cult.

### **The Charismatic Movement**

This is an extremely broad group comprising all sorts of subsets. Some of these subdivisions are large movements (such as UK Restorationism) while others are minor. While the UK movement emerged from the US phenomenon, there are significant differences in history and practice; but this is far too involved a subject to delineate here.

The precursors of the Charismatic Movement were: Methodist revivalist Camp Meetings (mirrored in Bible Weeks), the US Holiness Movement, the UK Keswick Movement, the Higher Life Movement, the 1904 Welsh Revival, the Pentecostal Movement, New Thought, Latter Rain, the Mind Sciences, US Revivalism, the Healing Movement, the Positive Thought Movement and many more.

The Charismatic Movement began in the early 1960s when Protestants began accepting Pentecostal principles, especially the Baptism in the Spirit (BIS) to receive tongues. In reality this was an acceptance of occult principles exhibited in Topeka and Azusa Street [see 'Pentecostalism'.] This experience began to be extensively adopted in Roman Catholic churches in America and slowly in Protestant churches with Episcopalian Dennis Bennett's confession that he spoke in tongues in 1960 being a watershed moment.

Yet Pentecostal healing evangelists [e.g. Branham, TL Osborn, Oral Roberts, Gordon Lindsay] had spread the Pentecostal experience outside of Pentecostal churches in itinerant revival campaigns years before; many individuals had received the BIS in tent meetings from the 1940s but remained in their denominations quietly. Bennett's experience was by no means unusual, but it got all the publicity and is thus credited with starting the Charismatic Movement (CM).

The CM is nothing but the expansion of Pentecostal doctrines and practices, chiefly the BIS, beyond its churches into the mainstream denominations, which had shunned Pentecostalism for decades. This was claimed to be the fulfilment of a prophecy by Smith Wigglesworth which involved David du Plessis, who began to minister to mainline churches in the 1960s. Other early pioneers of the CM were Agnes Sanford (Independent), Harald Bredesen (Lutheran then Dutch Reformed), Tommy Tyson (Methodist), Richard Winkler (Episcopalian), James Brown (Presbyterian), Glenn Clark (Camps Farthest Out), Derek Prince (Pentecostal), Robert Walker (Christian Life magazine), David Wilkerson, John Sherril, and Larry Christenson (Lutheran).

Ministries outside the churches also began to appear, such as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International led by Demos Shakarian, which had in fact begun in 1951, specifically to minister to non-Pentecostals. Many saw such organisations as opportunities to enjoy Pentecostal ministry and worship without being converted to that church. Journals began to be published to cater for such folk such as 'Voice' or 'Christian Life'.

Nevertheless, it was the experience of Dennis Bennett that formed the breakout moment. After he testified to speaking in tongues he was forced to resign from his LA suburban church, St Marks. Members who had also received the BIS, particularly Jean Stone, spread the word, despite being warned off. Stone got *Newsweek* and *Time* to run a story on Bennett. The church press then ran the story. Bennett transferred to Seattle, Washington, and revitalised a dying church where members received the BIS. He then received invites to speak far and wide.

Jean Stone also led a major thrust for the CM by forming the Blessed Trinity Society in 1961, which produced pamphlets and a magazine, '*Trinity*'. Trinity's board included du Plessis and Bredesen. Bredesen and Stone travelled widely bringing the Pentecostal message to mainline churches in gatherings called 'Christian Advances'.

Continuing this history would occupy hundreds of pages and is thus impossible here. However, in Britain the CM mainly originated in the Renewal Movement, which sought to keep the Pentecostal experience within the mainline churches; a forlorn hope. The main early focus was the Fountain Trust led by Michael Harper (Anglican) with its magazine '*Renewal*'. Early British CM leaders were Cecil Cousen, Campbell McAlpine, Edgar Trout and Arthur Wallis. Early on many realised that the cork was out of the bottle and the ministry of the Spirit could not be contained in the old denominations. People like my late friend David Lillie pressed for small independent house churches, many of which sprang up independently in the 70s (the House Church Movement), but the authoritarian wing seized power when the Restoration church emerged.

It is significant that the UK experience of the CM did not derive directly from Pentecostals but from American Charismatics. Certain US leaders had significant influence in Britain while books by Bennett, Wilkerson and Sherill had a huge influence. Most Britons still did not trust Pentecostals who were seen as a fringe group.

What happened was that people initially lived for ecumenical CM celebrations and camps and grudgingly remained loyal to Anglicanism on Sundays. Eventually this became preposterous as the life they desired was outside the church. In time new small churches arose all over the country, often house churches, with only a very few Anglican or Baptist churches maintaining renewal, such as those led by David Watson at York and Chorleywood. Brethren and Methodist churches largely failed to hold their 'Spirit-filled' members and now face extinction. When the Restoration Movement began in the later 70s, this mopped up all the closet Charismatics and swept them into the New Churches while mainline churches deteriorated and the Renewal Movement formally closed. However several Baptist leaders became prominent pioneers of the CM such as David Pawson, Doug McBain, Barney Coombs, Harold Owen and Edmund Heddle.

For radical Charismania history see sections on Restorationism, Signs and Wonders, New Thought, Branhamism, Manifest Sons of God and Latter Rain.

The extreme form of modern Charismaticism is now the Apostolic Reformation Movement.

### *Characteristics*

Initially the CM in Britain was centred on lively worship, body ministry, tongues and prophecy occasionally and a good social community. Preaching remained much as it was before. Very occasionally there may be a travelling healer minister. The focus was on Spirit-filled ministry and especially worship. This is not the case today after multiple foreign influences of a harder occult nature.

Modern characteristics

- Apostles and prophets: unbiblical in definition, authoritarian in practice. These gifts should not confer authority over men or churches. Biblical apostles plant new works; prophets edify and exhort. They are to be submissive to local church elders.
- False view of the Baptism of the Spirit.
- Perverted free-will Gospel (Arminianism) is common.
- Lively emotional worship leading to mystical passivity.
- Supposed spiritual gifts, which are fake or based on occultism.
- Dominionism, triumphalism.
- Authoritarian leadership structures (apostles. prophets).
- Cultic characteristics.
- Occult features: gold fillings, oil on the hands, glistening sheen on skin, coloured auras, falling down ('slain in the Spirit') etc.
- Occult practices: laying on of hands to impart power. Channelling. Healing by the word of knowledge. Astrology. The use of personal directive prophecy. Visualisation.
- Occult objectives: invulnerability, flying, levitation, walking through walls.
- Occult manifestations: screaming, shouting, barking, roaring, false visions & dreams.
- Mystical features: subjectivity, repetitive singing, emotionalism, and irrationality. 'Immortal' properties gained by mystical ascent of growth. Long periods of unrestrained praise to produce susceptibility.
- Altered states of consciousness (trances). Engineering personal susceptibility in meetings to produce this by hypnotic techniques. [Loud music, long periods of repetitive singing; loud exhortations by authoritarian leaders; abandonment of the Bible, irrationality demanded etc.]. Passivity leads to demonic deception.
- Unbiblical practices: exorcism of believers; sacramentalism (the use of objects to produce spiritual effect), being slain in the Spirit, false prophecy, false tongues, false healings, lack of self-control; irrationality; channelling; apostolic authority, women leaders etc.
- Authoritarian objectives: global control of political power and control of the whole church by apostles and prophets.
- Scripture becomes subordinate to the subjective inner voice of the 'Spirit'.
- Kundalini yoga type extreme effects.
- Constant seeking for new spiritual experiences.

Not all Charismatic churches exhibit all these characteristics.

Radical examples of Charismatic occult hysteria were evidenced in the Toronto Blessing, the Pensacola 'Revival', the Kansas City Prophets and the Lakeland 'Revival'.

See my papers, 'Charismatic Catastrophe', 'Questions for Charismatics', 'the Charismatic Movement is a failure', 'The Rescue Package', 'How Charismatic Churches Promote Old Covenant Religion'.

### **Christadelphians**

Founded in America in 1848 by John Thomas [1805-1871] when he split from the Campbellites. It rejected the beliefs and practices associated with Christian churches; thus the movement was called Christadelphianism ('brothers of Christ'). They claim to return to

the teaching of the earliest disciples but, in fact, it is a modern type of the ancient Arianism.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas was raised as a Congregationalist but was greatly influenced by the Campbellites (q.v.) and baptised by them after he emigrated to America in 1832. After 1847 he developed his view about the coming earthly kingdom which was not well received by most Campbellites. In 1848 he returned to Britain and was supported in the Midlands, Scotland and Plymouth. In London he wrote his explanation of the kingdom (*'Elpis Israel: an explanation of the kingdom of God'*). This was the start of the movement.

In 1862 he made a second visit to England preaching in about 15 cities. He met with Robert Roberts whom he appointed to succeed him. Roberts was an able speaker and writer and published *'Christendom Astray'*. Christadelphianism grew in Britain and the US with Roberts travelling extensively in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

In 1872-73 Roberts drew up the *Birmingham Statement of Faith* which became the doctrinal basis of all the ecclesias<sup>8</sup> (they didn't use the word 'church'). However, in the US there was a rift in the 1880s, when some ecclesias amended the statement.

Noted originally for their toleration and high ethical standards since they claim to follow the teachings of Jesus; however, today they demonstrate bigotry against orthodox Christianity and a demeaning of Christ. Thus they tend to withdraw from society; however, more recent practice has accepted entertainment and television. Due to their pacifism they are not allowed to work as a policeman, soldier, politician or anything that includes violence.

Today there are 300 ecclesias and 20,000 members in Britain, which is the main centre of the movement. There are 550 ecclesias worldwide.

### *Errors*

- Denial of the Trinity. God is one.
- Very wrong and blasphemous views of Christ: he was not divine or eternal but came to being at the incarnation. He died as a representative rather than a substitute. Thus they deny the eternal generation of the Son; Jesus had no prior existence before the incarnation. Jesus did not possess an immaculate sinless nature but his flesh was full of the same propensities and desires as ordinary humans. He was sinless by rendering complete obedience but was subject to the impulses of innate sin. Therefore, Jesus is not to be worshipped.
- Christadelphians deny the deity of the Holy Spirit and even deny his personality. He is merely an impersonal power or energy emanating from God.
- Since the deity of Jesus is denied, they also deny the atonement as a satisfaction of divine wrath. Christ did not make satisfaction for man's sin with God by dying on the cross; he paid no debt in redemption. The orthodox doctrines of substitutionary atonement and imputed righteousness are demoralising and wrong. Christ's righteousness was not imputed to believers.
- Salvation is dependent upon the character one develops after baptism. Man is saved by his own merit and good works. If a person fails in good works he will be annihilated.

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<sup>7</sup> Arianism: denies the divinity of Christ. It originated with the Alexandrian priest Arius (c.250–c.336). Arianism maintained that the Son of God was created by the Father and was therefore neither co-eternal nor consubstantial with the Father.

<sup>8</sup> Ekklesia is the NT Greek word for 'church'.

- The core of their faith is that Christ will return in power to set up a worldwide theocracy beginning at Jerusalem, and that belief in this is necessary for salvation. Worthy Christadelphians will be made kings and priests to rule with Christ on this earth; sinners go to hell. Hope in this is salvation ('we are saved by hope'). [This Premillennial idea of an earthly Jewish kingdom of God was common in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century as the millennium approached.] Salvation is thus a progressive journey to be completed in the millennium (a 1,000-year rule of Christ on earth). [This fails to see that this world is burned up at the return of Christ and a new earth is resurrected that is heaven on earth.]
- Conditional immortality: immortality is dependent upon the character one develops after baptism. Immortality is only conferred upon those becoming a son of God and the wicked are annihilated. There is no material heaven or hell. There is no immortality of the soul.
- There is no personal devil. The term is a personification of sin in the flesh.
- Congregationalism; no clergy and few formalities (this aspect is Biblical).
- Baptism by immersion on profession in the faith of the future coming kingdom (not Christ). They believe in baptismal regeneration; that is, baptism is essential for salvation and true baptism must be preceded by affirmation of the Christadelphian creed.
- After baptism a candidate is considered as 'born of water' that cleanses his past life but he is now on probation as a candidate for resurrection. If that is attained he is 'born of the Spirit' and becomes a son of God. [C.f. Campbellites.]
- Marriage with non-Christadelphians is unacceptable.
- Christadelphians believe that only they constitute the body of Christ and there is no salvation in any other church. [Note: thus salvation did not occur until the Victorian age. This doctrine alone beggars belief and shows the depth of Christadelphian, and other similar sects', errors.]
- Sheep stealing: since the gospel message of Christadelphians is so poor and without assurance, they go to great lengths to make converts from other churches but have little impact in reaching out to sinners outside of churches in the real world. Thus the church is small.
- It teaches that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity are completely wrong. Despite giving superficial appearances in publications of being Christian, and despite their claims of being Christian, they deny virtually all that Christianity teaches.

These are very serious errors and constitute a heretical theology that is not only unbiblical but is also blasphemous. Therefore, Christadelphians cannot be considered as sectarian Christians at all but are a cultic group in the same class as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and Christian Scientists.

### **Christian Science / Church of Christ Scientist**

This is a US Christian mind science sect founded by Mary Baker Eddy [1821-1910] in 1879 who was influenced by PP Quimby (q.v. and see 'New Thought'), whom she plagiarised and adopted his occultism and Mesmerism. She published *Science and Health with a key to the Scriptures* in 1875 copying whole portions of Quimby's teaching and summarising his doctrine in the whole book. Establishment of the church in Boston (The First Church of Christ Scientist) followed four years later.

While this cult claims to worship God, in practice its worship is to an abstract, pantheistic being and the main attention is upon healing by mind-control and denying the existence of pain and death. God is mind, spirit, and health. Jesus was a man and as matter, did not



exist. Christ was not God but merely an idea. Christ is the ideal truth that comes to heal sickness. The Holy Spirit is 'Divine Science' who reveals the divine principle: *God is divine principle*.<sup>9</sup>

The church has no preaching; instead readers read parts of the Bible and her book. No commentary is permitted. The followers of Mary Baker Eddy believed that her revelations were absolute and unalterable truths; thus they gave Eddy powers that only belong to God. This is blasphemy of the first order. *Science and Health* was stated to be '*the voice of truth to this age*'.<sup>10</sup>

Despite her teachings, Eddy was troubled with illness her whole life and died as a suffering recluse. She was also married three times, divorcing her second husband.

There are over 2,000 groups in the USA and less than 1,000 globally. The central HQ is in Boston.

### *Errors*

- Mary Baker Eddy claimed to have divine revelation and that her book was dictated by God and was equally as inspired as the Bible and takes precedence.
- Wrong views of Jesus. 'Christ' was not God but merely an idea, the ideal truth. Contradictorily, Jesus was a physical man who presented Christ, therefore is not God. Jesus did not die on the cross nor rose from the grave; no man can die. There is a difference between Jesus and Christ: '*Jesus is the human man and Christ is the divine idea; hence the duality of Jesus the Christ*'.<sup>11</sup>
- Denial of the Holy Spirit as a personal being. The Spirit is 'Divine Science', eternal life, truth and love.
- Only God and the mind have ultimate reality; sin, death and illness are illusions.
- God is spirit and 'all in all' (Pantheism). God is mind, goodness, health and well-being. If God is all, there is no matter.
- There is no reality except Mind or Spirit. Materialism is sin, death, sickness, evil. (Dualism).<sup>12</sup>
- Man is not matter. Man resides eternally in God (since God is all) and is not to be differentiated from God.
- Sin is an illusion. Salvation is knowing that you cannot die; it is life, truth and love.
- Heaven, hell, creation, the Fall, and redemption do not exist.
- Mixture of Christianity with occultism, particularly faith-healing however this is a misnomer since they deny that sickness actually exists at all. Sickness results from ill-formed beliefs or from malicious 'Animal Magnetism' (both ideas come from Quimby).

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' (1875).

<sup>10</sup> 'The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany', p456-7.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p361.

<sup>12</sup> Dualism was prominent in Greek philosophy and transferred into early Gnosticism (and especially Docetism), which troubled the church. Theologians contested this vehemently for centuries but it was resurrected by Descartes during the Enlightenment (1700s). This Cartesian Dualism profoundly impacted intellectual history so that life was seen as comprising two different spheres, mind and body. Different thinkers began to either emphasise one or the other. Quimby emphasised the mind. Christian theology teaches that man is a whole, comprising spirit, soul and body, but none of these are evil in themselves; they are merely vessels. What is evil is the old nature, which is expressed through the body and the soul not submitting to Christ ('sin living in me', Rm 7:17). God's creation is good.

## **Church of God of Prophecy**

### *Roots of the Church*

They claim Anabaptist influences, but their earliest leaders were, rather, Baptist preachers. There were some Quaker influences, but they were more influenced by the Holiness Movement. They appear to have parallels with Azusa Street Pentecostals.

The church started out as the 'Church of God'. It was instituted as the 'Christian Union' in 1886 by R. G. Spurling, a Baptist Missionary preacher, with the determination to restore primitive Christianity. Both Spurling and his co-worker Bryant were Holiness leaders. It grew slowly, in an isolated mountainous area, until in 1896 tongues and healings were experienced during a revival in Cherokee County, North Carolina. In the aftermath they experienced persecution. In 1902 the church added guidelines and changed its name to the Holiness Church and on 13 June 1903 AJ Tomlinson became pastor, after proclaiming that this church was the church of God in the Bible. By 1905 they had four congregations in three neighbouring states and were growing westward, adopting the name: of 'Church of God' in 1907, despite its existing use elsewhere. Hearing of the outbreaks of the Baptism in the Spirit in other areas, e.g. Azusa St, they aggressively preached the Pentecostal experience.

The office of General Overseer was created in 1909 with Tomlinson elected to the post. He had previously been moderator and clerk at an earlier assembly (1906), partly because he was one of the few present who could read and write. Expansion across the south-eastern states continued and in 1910 their first missionaries were sent out to the Bahamas. This year they also set up a magazine, codified their teachings, and doubled their membership to 1885 people. By 1917 they had set up an assembly of 12 men, a publishing house, and a Bible Training school.

In 1923, Tomlinson withdrew from the movement to form a new one after being replaced as General Overseer. The council of 12 were unhappy with his autocratic ways. He took 2-3000 adherents with him and the debacle had to be settled in the courts. The church was originally known as: 'The Church of God, over which A.J. Tomlinson is General Overseer'. It became the 'Church of God of Prophecy' in 1952 by a court decision. Tomlinson had been strongly influenced by Quaker ideas and C.G. Finney. He also claimed the Holiness type of sanctification and endorsed the healing movement. Another bad influence was Frank Sandford's Shiloh in Maine.

His doctrinal confusion is shown in his being baptised three times. In 1907 he strongly preached the Baptism in the Spirit with tongues as the initial evidence, yet he also joined seekers at the 'altar' for the very thing he had just preached. His behaviour was repeated by his son, Homer, who started his own church when he failed to secure the General Overseer post in 1943, also called 'the Church of God'. Homer's subsequent behaviour is zany if not insane. He celebrated a coronation service for himself in 101 nations, calling himself, 'King of the World' wearing a scarlet robe, seated on a throne, holding an inflatable globe, then crowning himself. He claimed that these services halted droughts, and ended wars etc.

### *Heresies*

- The usual Pentecostal errors: unchecked subjective directions, tongues as the initial evidence of Baptism in the Spirit, acceptance of exotic ministry (e.g. being slain in the Spirit), weak doctrinal teaching (if any), acceptance of false prophecies and healings, etc.
- Healing is in the atonement, i.e. it is automatic for Christians if they believe.
- Extreme Premillennialism.
- Rebaptism after re-conversion.

- Arminianism.
- There is an emphasis on praxis at the expense of truth.
- Sanctification is over-emphasised and is of 'holiness' origin.
- Restorationism.
- Exclusive ideas: they believe that Jesus founded the church on Mt Hattin (Mk 3:13) which survived until 325 AD, ruined by layers of errors. Throughout history, various people have uncovered this dross bit by bit (e.g. Luther) until the complete revelation of the original church took place on June 13 1903 (when Tomlinson became the pastor of the Church of God!). Their teaching used to focus on their church as the '*sole habitation of God*'; but in recent times they have dropped this idea. Church decline has required that they get involved with other churches.<sup>13</sup>
- Anti-intellectual.
- Dualistic - God is not in complete control.
- Eschatological texts are applied to experiences now - i.e. restorationist tendencies.

### *Wrong Practices*

- Washing the saint's feet.
- Enforced total abstinence of liquor and tobacco.
- Use of a flag which has, at times, been treated as an icon.
- Short and long-term fasting is encouraged.
- Emphasis in meetings upon the subjective immediate impressions of people, so that the meeting could stop for outbreaks of tongues, shouted prayer etc. replacing the sermon.
- After the death of Tomlinson, the youngest son, Milton, was chosen by an interpreted tongue in 1943.
- Indulgence in lengthy prayer meetings that can last up to 12 hours. Members are expected to attend several services a week as well as extra meetings on special occasions which can last for weeks on end.
- Overriding emphasis upon soulish extravagances in meetings: e.g. music, 'spiritual' experiences, tongues, healing etc.
- The preaching tends to be issue oriented. It is emotional, shouted, soulish and superficial, but does frequently refer to scripture. There tends to be a focus on the Holy Spirit at the expense of Jesus e.g: '*The Holy Spirit rules in time, he rules in eternity, we are to bow to him*'.<sup>14</sup>
- There is a literal mourner's bench ('altar') at the front of the church for those surrendering to God etc.
- Members cannot purchase life insurance.
- The church is anti formal education.
- The church is anti medicine to the extent that pain and death is accepted rather than medical treatment.
- The church has dissolved existing marriages.
- Strange practice of 'lifting up the church' in meetings.
- Additional giving to missions, over and above normal tithing, is insisted upon.
- In the 50's they stopped members from having televisions.

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<sup>13</sup> 'What of the Future?'; Teddy Powell (Tape CG601), Brighton Conference 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

- They prohibit the wearing of shorts in public, as well as rings, lipstick, theatre going, movies and public swimming. A person is not accepted for membership if wearing any jewellery, including wedding rings.
- Immersion of the individual in the group identity.

### *Wrong Church Structures*

- Authoritarianism: one man leads the church for life (the General Overseer).
- The overall structure is Episcopalian and not Biblical, the General Overseer appoints state and national leaders.
- Has women pastors and national leaders. [They have one of the highest rates of women leaders.]
- There is a strong oral tradition which binds, despite written formulations. E.g. women's ministry has some limitations, for instance they cannot lead marriage services, yet there is no limit in the constitution.

### *Miscellaneous*

- They would not formally join with other evangelical bodies, or even Pentecostal ones and retained the original Azusa Street type of Pentecostal distinctive which was riddled with problems [note, for instance, that witches and mediums frequented these early meetings and were not dismissed. How could a witch enjoy sharing in a meeting which was of God?]. The link with Azusa St is strengthened by the fact that Tomlinson was Baptised in the Spirit after Seymour (leader of Azusa St) laid hands on him.
- The work in the UK started in 1952. It currently has 84 locations and a national membership of about five thousand.

### **Darwin Fish**

The website of Darwin Fish ('A True Church'). Fish leads a small cult of 50 people but has a powerful on-line influence, teaching that there are no other genuine Christians bar his group, and a few others. Indeed he consigns most evangelical believers in history to hell, including famous sound theologians.

Fish condemns both monergism (e.g. Calvinism) and synergism (e.g. Arminianism) and claims that he alone is Biblical in setting up a new system, which is a measure of his hubris. Such a system is not theologically possible; as a result his teaching is contradictory and confused.

He marshals Biblical texts in all his papers to appear sound; however, these are often false references or wrongly interpreted verses.

Fish is a heretic of the first order. Despite some of his articles focusing on important issues he is a false teacher and must be denounced as such. He appears to be taken in by his own delusion (as 2 Thess 2 predicted) and thus comes across as very zealous and sincere, but he is wrong. He may oppose many other teachers whom we oppose, but Fish's articles are dangerous heresy.

### *Errors*

- Pride. Only he teaches the truth.

- Sandemanianism: Fish believes that people are saved by knowledge. Though they claim that it is Christ who saves, this salvation is dependent upon a person knowing and understanding all the truth of scripture.<sup>15</sup>
- Pre-Tribulational Dispensationalism: Fish believes in the secret rapture, the seven-year tribulation, two second comings and so forth.
- Meritorious Works.
- He denies perseverance. He teaches sovereign election, then teaches that true believers can be lost then says the reason is election. *'theological error, no matter what the issue, has the potential to damn the soul.'*
- Denies total depravity. After accepting the Calvinist position initially, he then states, *'Yet, it should also be noted for clarity, that a lost man could, if and when God so determined (Psalm 16:2; Romans 11:36), perform that which is truly good, yet the man may never come to salvation. ... People do indeed choose good'* [Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth, July 2001]. As usual his quotes do not support his position. Ps 16:2 supports Calvinism; Rm 11:36 is irrelevant to the argument. The Bible teaches that Calvin was correct in that all an unregenerate man can do is commit splendid sins, even the ploughing (i.e. honest work) of the wicked is sin before God (Prov 21:4). Good works only arise from God and these are all planned in eternity (Eph 2:10).
- Confused on free will. He supports the doctrine of free will, despite also contending that man's will is not free, doing evil continually. This is typical of his double-mindedness and self-contradiction.
- Confusion about God's love. Fish teaches that God loves and hates the same people at the same time. This shows a deep confusion and misrepresentation of the attributes of God. God only does things fully, perfectly and eternally. If he loves someone, he has loved them from eternity and will love them everlastingly. The source of this love is Christ. God only loves those who are in the beloved Son. The elect were placed by God into Christ in eternity and thus were loved from then (Eph 1:4-5).
- He denies Limited atonement.
- Fish denies Arminian notions of free will and election (being based on divine foreknowledge), so he more or less asserts unconditional election - double predestination. Yet he then firmly asserts that Christ died for everyone. Having claimed that God decrees reprobation, he then teaches that Christ died for those reprobates.
- God is the cause of sin. He teaches that God is the originator of sin; *'God, who is nonetheless holy and righteous in all His ways (Psalm 99:3, 5, 9; 145:17), is the cause of all things, even sin'* [Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth, July 2001].
- Denial of God's sovereignty over men.
- He makes the point that God is in two minds.
- Denial of the Trinity: *'The "Trinity" falls short of the glory of God.'* ['Where do we stand', Part One]. Following an excessive literal hermeneutic, he claims that there are seven Spirits in God resulting in a Godhead of nine persons altogether.
- Excessive literalism. This is a result of his Dispensationalism; this theology demands arbitrary literal interpretations, especially of prophecy, even when the NT interprets the prophetic passages spiritually. His ridiculous literal interpretations result in claiming that there are seven Holy Spirits resulting in a Godhead of nine persons [see above]. He teaches that God is Jerusalem; even the worst literal errors of Dispensationalists pale before this nonsense.

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<sup>15</sup> The Sandemanians taught similarly that salvation was intellectual, dependent upon knowing the right things. This is close to Gnosticism, which is salvation by knowing mysteries – however in Gnosticism this is imparted via a mystical experience. Fish teaches knowledge by an intellectual experience.

- Wrong use of scripture quotes. Fish repeatedly places many scriptural quotes in brackets in the argument in order to give the appearance of a Biblical teaching; yet when these texts are examined, they are either irrelevant, sometimes just plain wrong or mean something quite different.
- Double-thinking and self-contradiction. Fish teaches that God predestines the reprobate to eternal damnation, but then claims that Jesus died for all men. Fish asserts that God hates the reprobate but then teaches that God loves all men. He teaches that God's grace is irresistible and then immediately avers that it can be resisted. He teaches that God sovereignly chooses who will be saved, then claims that a saved person can fall away. He strongly teaches that God is sovereign over all, and then later denies that God is sovereign over some.
- Ethical Errors. He condones masturbation. Fish dishonours Biblical teaching on marriage by teaching that polygamy (more than one spouse) for men (polygyny) is acceptable but that polyandry (more than one husband) is not allowable for women. He also claims that it is acceptable for a man to have concubines.
- Cruel Judgmentalism. Setting himself up as sovereign judge and jury, Fish declares that almost everyone in history is in hell, including godly men such as CH Spurgeon and Martin Luther. Since the standard of salvation is of his definition, anyone outside his company is not saved.
- Elitism. Though not precisely stating that only his little church of 50 people is saved, he virtually says this. Indeed he virtually states that only his church and a few others are the only ones saved in history.

For more information see my paper, 'The errors of Darwin Fish'.

### **Divine Science**

An offshoot of Christian Science and one of the Mind Science sects spawned by Quimby.

It was founded in 1889 by Nona Brooks in Denver. She had been influenced by Emma Curtis, who had parted company from Mary Baker Eddy and had founded the Christian Science theological School in Chicago, which became a centre for New Thought. Another woman, Melinda Cramer, had been teaching similar ideas and teamed up with Brooks (and her two sisters) in 1898.

#### *Errors*

- God is perfect mind and is present throughout the universe (Pantheism, monism) and this is the only real, authentic presence there is. The Father is the source of goodness and is everywhere.
- Christ is an indwelling principle, which anyone can realise; he represents the universal man.
- The Holy Spirit is a force that imparts illumination of self-realisation (Gnosticism).
- Spirit is the substance of all matter, thus sin, sickness and disease is illusory because it contradicts spirit.
- Evil and sin are the result of a lack of knowledge of the goodness of God. Evil isn't actually real because God is everywhere. Salvation is knowledge about the spirit (Gnosticism).
- The goal is to achieve oneness with the divine (Hinduism).

### **Elim churches**

The Elim Pentecostal Church, originally the Elim Evangelistic Band, was founded by Welsh evangelist George Jeffreys with the first church being established in 1916 in Belfast. In 1919

the Elim Pentecostal Alliance was founded and by the end of 1920 there were 15 assemblies in Ireland.

Jeffreys preached all over Britain and established a church at Leigh on Sea, Essex in 1921. The headquarters were originally in Belfast but Jeffries shifted the organisation to Britain joining his brother Stephen in Grimsby but George moved to Clapham, London in 1922. The brothers spend five months in Canada and the US in 1924. On return they ministered to large crowds in Barking where apparently there were miracles.

After this Stephen separated from George who continued in Ilford and East Ham with some other leaders joining him. [In 1926 Stephen initially joined the newly formed Assemblies of God church as a pioneer church planter with many miracles being witnessed.] A Bible school was set up in Clapham in 1925. A constitution emerged in 1922. Then the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance was formed in 1929. This emphasised Jesus as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and Coming King. By 1928 there were 70 churches; another 108 were added by 1934.

In 1924 EJ Phillips took over the administration at Clapham with a structure modelled on the Salvation Army. In 1934 administration was transferred to an executive council of nine men with George as principal. The supreme governing body was the annual ministerial conference, which followed the pattern of Methodism. The first missionaries went to join WFP (Willie) Burton in Africa in 1920. The Elim Missionary Council was formed in 1929 (now Elim International Missions).

After 1934 George was less successful in Britain but achieved great results in Europe. He had 12,000 converts in Switzerland in 1935, then in two weeks he gained 2,000 converts in 1936. His search for the ideal church government led to tensions and constant changes. This led to George resigning from the Alliance in 1939. A small group of leaders joined him to form the Bible Pattern Church Fellowship at Nottingham in 1940. War prevented George from ministering in Europe and a barren period followed. [See 'Bible Pattern Churches'.]

In 1944 an evangelistic committee was formed and PS Brewster launched a crusade in Wigan, the first of several. By 1953 there were 250 churches and 300 in 1962. In 1954 ten Full Gospel Testimony churches (formed by Fred Squire) joined the Alliance; other churches joined later.

EJ Phillips retired as secretary general in 1957. In 1965 the Clapham offices were relocated to Cheltenham. The Bible College was relocated to Capel, Surrey until it moved to Nantwich, Cheshire, in 1987. Over the years the constitution was adapted with more emphasis now given to team leadership. Though growth slowed down, membership is actually larger than at any time in history. Today there are about 380 churches in Britain with about 38,000 members.

Regarding general Pentecostal doctrines, see 'Pentecostalism'.

### **The Emerging Church**

This diverse church movement began in the mid-90s, encompassing various streams, sharing basic principles but yet are quite distinct. In essence, they seek to deconstruct Christianity and reform basic Christian beliefs and church practices. There is no formal leadership, no strategic programme, no central office, and a multitude of expressions. Since it is still developing and quite amorphous, proponents call this process a 'conversation' – a process of change – thus it is a movement emerging out of the

traditional church. What it is emerging into appears to be amorality, heresy, mysticism, hedonism and chaos.

As Postmodern society shifted in its thinking, the Emergent Church developed to fit in with what people wanted in a modern church – it is thus not based on rational certainty but consensus experience and mysticism. In some ways this movement is a reaction against the heavy shepherding and authoritarian structures of the Charismatic Movement, the slick flamboyance of Seeker Sensitive churches, and the dead orthodoxy of institutional churches. Many want to reconnect to the traditions and symbols of the past ('vintage-church') after abandoning the professionalism of Seeker-Sensitive innovations; they seek hymns, rituals, chants, crosses and candles instead of warehouses and modern entertainment.

Some adherents (usually the more radical) propose a difference between the 'Emerging Church' and the 'Emergent Church', i.e. between the broader work and churches actually committed to the Emergent vision.

*Essential principles:*

- Decentralisation.
- Openness and tolerance; broad acceptance of diversity.
- Emphasis on subjectivity, feelings and experiences as opposed to logic and truth.
- Rejection of dogmatism – favouring narrative portions of the Bible, parables and personal experience that can be interpreted in any manner by anyone. In this they follow Narrative Theology.<sup>16</sup> The Bible is treated subjectively more like art or poetry, than analysed as a source of doctrine encompassing many forms of literature.
- Avoiding the clear meaning of the words of scripture by using various hermeneutics (systems of interpretation) to avoid the clear meaning; e.g. to avoid the doctrine of hell as eternal punishment by saying that Jesus meant something else.
- Relativism (i.e. no absolute truth; truth and morality emerges from the context of historical culture).
- Highlighting mystery – scripture is full of mystery and is not clear.
- Antinomianism.
- Tendency towards liberal theology. Some extremes are universalistic and syncretistic.
- Anti-legalistic; spiritual life is an individual, gradual process of formation. Conversation rather than prohibitions.
- Specific jargon (such as *generous, missional, authentic, narrative, conversation*) become terms which readily identify emergent people.
- Some aspects show similar thinking to neo-evangelicalism, Catholic Karl Rahner, and Open-Theism.
- Social Gospel rather than truth.

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<sup>16</sup> *Narrative theology* (or 'postliberal theology') – a development of theology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which focused on a narrative presentation of scriptural truth, rather than systematic theology. It was a reaction against theological liberalism and prompted further movements in evangelicalism and Romanism. It focused more on community thinking than liberal individualism and in some ways asserted traditional methods. Theological enquiry was by means of a conversation, inter-personal dialogue and communal life leading to a living liturgy. It arose in Yale Divinity School and was influenced by Karl Barth, Thomas Aquinas and French Catholics such as Henri de Lubac. There were also philosophical influences: from Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, the moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre, and sociology of Clifford Geertz and Peter Berger on community.



### *Essential practice*

- Heavy use of modern technology, such as computers and multimedia, in services.
- Open dialogue.
- Anti-hierarchy.
- Acceptance of diverse morals, beliefs and practices. Behaviour condemned by most churches may well be tolerated (such as swearing, drinking, and pornography.) Some of their works are just plain foul, using a multitude of bad language and irreverent expressions for God.
- Preference of communal practices (such as testimonies, sharing, prayer, group recitation, meals).
- Focus on social issues rather than eternal truth – this leads to social action, local community involvement & hospitality ('missional living').
- Open networks of communication between churches.
- Practice of worship is very varied, ranging from Charismatic and the use of modern music, to mystical reflective liturgy. It is generated by the local cultural influence.
- A growing interest in monasticism (called 'new-monasticism'), with the development of communities, such as Moot in the UK.

Influences include: Post Liberal theology e.g. George Lindbeck; Lesslie Newbigin & David Bosch (missiologists); Richard Foster and The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers); the 70s House Church Mvt; New Evangelicalism; NT Wright (New Perspective).

Proponents include: Brian McLaren; Rob Bell; Dan Kimball; Doug Pagitt; Frank Viola; David Sherwood; Bill Dahl; Leonard Sweet; Spencer Burke, Erwin McManus, Tommy Kyllonen (aka Urban D) and Donald Miller.

### *Substance of the problem*

This movement seeks to undermine almost everything that Biblical church is meant to be. It denies dogmatism, which means that there is no instruction in vital Biblical doctrines. How can anyone know what is true and what is deception? It emphasises subjectivism and passivity. It favours heretical ideas such as monasticism (world-flight); relativism; antinomianism, the New Perspective; mysticism; diverse morals, beliefs and practices; neo-evangelicalism; Catholic Karl Rahner; Open-Theism; and a tendency towards liberal theology. Some extremes are universalistic and syncretistic.

### **Gene Edwards**

Edwards comes from an American Baptist background but is famous for being a radical proponent of House Churches.

This author and teacher gained great notoriety in the 1990s and published a number of very popular books in a racy style. One reason why these were attractive is because his criticisms of the church were accurate; they were a necessary check on the contemporary situation in Britain and America.

He gained a small following in the US and tried to start a movement in Britain. I attended the conference where he tried to do this and confronted him face to face for an hour before I left.<sup>17</sup> He was somewhat taken aback and had no answers. He failed to find traction and gradually disappeared from view in Britain but continued to have influence in America,

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<sup>17</sup> See my paper, 'Concerns about the teaching of Gene Edwards' (1996).

where he did considerable damage for a while. However, his books are regularly found by Christians both new and second-hand and his teachings should be contended against.

Most of the churches he has been associated with have been devastated by his authoritarian dominance, which stems from his mentoring by Witness Lee. Indeed, most leaders who were associated with him left him, with many writing criticisms of his leadership (e.g. Jon Zens, Steve Atkerson) and character. Of his network of churches only five remained at my last inspection. Despite stating that church splits are evil and even writing a book condemning them, Edward's churches have suffered more splits than most. Everywhere he was involved he left a trail of wounded, damaged people.

Theologically he is essentially a somewhat confused mystical Arminian with liberal, autocratic tendencies.

### *Errors of character*

- Hubris: He has repeatedly claimed that he is the only person to know something. E.g. he has stated that only he has known about true Biblical church vision and Biblical church leadership in the last 1700 years. *'This is more revolutionary than the Reformation.'*<sup>18</sup>
- At a conference he said that his church network was, *'becoming a force as great or greater than the Reformation of the 1500's'*.
- At one conference he stated that every single book on the book table was worthless. Then he said that all the other speakers at the conference were useless and only he had ministered Christ.
- Edwards has claimed publicly to be the only man who has read every English book on the history of the early church, and to be the first person on earth in modern times to truly understand the history of the New Testament.<sup>19</sup>
- He makes wild, excessive statements that are false in order to grab the reader's attention. For example, *'You have not lived until you have learned how to loathe every brother in the church. Unmitigated, unbridled hate mixed with the lust to murder. Slowly!'*<sup>20</sup> *'The church is not led by a minister. Nor is the church led by elders.'*<sup>21</sup> *'Sisters veto anything and everything which they don't like.'*<sup>22</sup>
- The outcome of his ministry is contradictory, mirroring his own inner contradictions. For example, he teaches that women have equal authority with men but in practice his leadership is all male. There are many other contradictions.

### *Errors of doctrine*

- His preaching demonstrates Arminian emphases, but he doesn't talk about doctrine much and never systematically.
- Claims that the church is a tribe, specifically like a Native America Indian tribe, but the Bible explains that it is a family, a household.

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<sup>18</sup> 'The Brothers Conference', taped message.

<sup>19</sup> 'Gene Edwards: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly', Steve Atkerson (New Testament Restoration Foundation), Beresford Job (Chigwell Christian Fellowship), Dan Trotter (New Reformation Review) and Jon Zens (Searching Together).

<sup>20</sup> Edwards, 'When the church was led by laymen', p53.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p24.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p44.

- Emphasis on the church being a young girl instead of a mature bride (Eph 5:25) or a mature man (Ephesians 2:15, 4:13).<sup>23</sup>
- He denies the centrality of Christ in the church. ‘Someone will say, “Why don’t we put Christ in the centre?” No we don’t put Christ in the centre ... It’s my job to get off the centre of the stage and put non-laymen in the centre of the stage ... My job is to turn the church of Jesus Christ over to brothers.’<sup>24</sup>
- ‘The ekklesia is not an idea, a philosophy, or concept. The nature of the ekklesia is elastic, adaptable, changing and indefinable. Organic. Forever unfinished. Yes, and always defying definition.’<sup>25</sup>
- ‘The New Testament does not give us a blueprint to glue together a church.’<sup>26</sup>

### *Denigration of Scripture*

- He told me personally that you cannot rely on the Bible to build a church.
- He repeatedly denigrates the Bible in his speeches.
- ‘Beware the man bearing verses. A person who has known genuine church life will not be bearing verses or theory. He will be bringing you Christ.’<sup>27</sup> In other words, the subjective judgment of Edwards is what counts.
- ‘Only a move from being Bible-centred to being Christ-centred can save us from the dubious honour of being like the past.’<sup>28</sup>
- ‘With an illiteracy rate over 99% and books as rare as a three-horned cow, are we actually convinced that first-century believers sat around and studied the Bible?’<sup>29</sup>

### *Errors of exegesis*

- He frequently makes clear errors regarding Biblical statements. For example ‘Elder only squeaks onto the stage. You find them among the bushes in the backdrop of the stage’s scenery.’ (Acts has five references to Christian elders. All the epistles in the New Testament combined have eight. That is a total of thirteen references to Christian elders.)<sup>30</sup> This is wrong. The facts are: *presbuteros* – 65; *presbuterion* – 3; but these also include the elders of Israel. Christian elders: 17 plus 12 references in Revelation (which are Christian, but in heaven). This is a total of 29 (Acts has 10, 5 in one chapter alone i.e. c15). To this we must add: *episkopos* (bishop, overseer i.e. elder) - 4, *episkope* -1, *episkopeo* -1. Grand total = 35! This does not include references to pastors (*poimaino*) (i.e. shepherds), leader(s) (*proistemi*), rule (*hegeomai*). Another example, ‘(the word pastor) it appears once ... that word appears once. The same thing is true of elders.’<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p18, ‘She (the church) is a girl! A beautiful, living, breathing girl.’ ‘This is a girl. Her biological genetics, her DNA, has been mistaken to be New Testament structure.’ (‘The House Church Movement - Which Direction?’, p104.)

<sup>24</sup> ‘The Brothers Conference’, taped message.

<sup>25</sup> Edwards et. al., ‘The House Church Movement - Which Direction?’ SeedSowers, (2001), p44.

<sup>26</sup> Edwards et. al., ‘The House Church Movement - Which Direction?’ SeedSowers, (2001), p104.

<sup>27</sup> Edwards et. al., ‘The House Church Movement - Which Direction?’ SeedSowers, (2001) p56.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p59.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p90.

<sup>30</sup> ‘When the church was led by laymen’, p19.

<sup>31</sup> It is true that ‘pastor’ only appears once in the English translation but variations of the Greek word appear frequently and are often ascribed to Jesus, our example of pastoring.

- False claims about Paul's apostleship: 'I don't know that Paul ever left, except he left a mess. No that's not true in Derbe; there's no record of his having left a mess. Everywhere else he left, he left a mess.'<sup>32</sup> This is utterly false.

#### *Errors of practice*

- Denial of the Biblical role of elders. 'You might as well take her out (the church) and shoot her dead the day you get them (i.e. elders).'<sup>33</sup>
- Denial of deacons.
- Women given a veto on any church decision.
- Élitism: only his church network is correct.

#### *Errors of history*

- He stated publicly<sup>34</sup> that there were no books available to the public until the 1600's. Clearly he has not read Homer's<sup>35</sup> *Odyssey* or *Iliad* which were penned thousands of years ago.
- He stated<sup>36</sup> that almost all Biblical Christians in the early church would have been unable to read. Why then did Paul tell his readers to pass his letters around the churches to be read by all? Even many slaves needed to read and write to be able to function as stewards of a master.
- He has repeatedly stated that there are only ten church planters in the world.

Edwards is a dangerous person. Although he has some good points about local church life, in the main he is a charlatan with no depth. His ability to spin a yarn gives him credibility to the gullible, but he is a false teacher. One should also realise that his right-hand man for many years was Frank Viola who exhibited similar traits.

### **Gnosticism**

Gnosticism is a term covering various Greek religious cults (mystery religions) that plagued the early church, which blended mysticism with ritual. It is usually ascetic and originally dualistic in its conception of God (there's a good one and a bad one who struggle for supremacy;) and man (matter is evil, spirit is good).

It teaches a series of emanations (aeons or angels) from God instead of Christ as the mediator between God and man. It is elitist in claiming that only initiates to its system have the necessary secret ('mystery') knowledge (Gk. *gnosis*) about God. In this it elevates leaders as having special authority from God.

Rituals included: hymns, repetitive singing, chanting, drugs, meditation, ecstatic experiences, asceticism or hedonism etc. emphasising the need for constant new spiritual experiences. It is somewhat like the various modern New Age groups.

Modern sects and cults can be called Gnostic when they claim:

- To have a special mystic knowledge that only they can bring revelation on.

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<sup>32</sup> 'The Brothers Conference', taped message.

<sup>33</sup> 'The Brothers Conference', taped message.

<sup>34</sup> A conference in Southampton that I attended briefly.

<sup>35</sup> Greek epic poet of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Although modern scholarship suggests that his poems were written down later, that would still be hundreds of years before Christ.

<sup>36</sup> A conference in Southampton that I attended briefly.

- When the leader of some cult is necessary to explain mystical divine things that no one else understands.
- Or that some special mystical experience is necessary to be initiated into divine understanding and practice.

Thus we observe that much of modern Charismatic mysticism bears great similarity to the essential features of Gnosticism.

### **The Higher Life Movement**

(Also Keswick Movement, Victorious Life or Abundant Life.)

The Keswick Movement was based upon an annual conference at Keswick, which was heavily influenced by the US Holiness Movement. From this sprang Higher Life, which was a more moderate version. The key early teachers were: Robert Pearsall Smith, Hanna Whitall Smith, Evan Hopkins, Bishop HCG Moule and William E Boardman. The origin is usually claimed to be WE Boardman's book, *The Higher Christian Life* published in 1859.

This was a diverse movement with many famous British leaders that came from various denominations: Brethren, Independent, Baptist, Quaker, Dutch Reformed, Dispensational, Presbyterian, Anglican Methodist, Holiness, and so on. As a result some of its emphases are good while others are mystical and antinomian. Famously, Watchman Nee made his name at the Keswick conference in 1938. HCG Moule, who generally held to Reformed truths, reflected the best of this movement. Famous modern writers include Watchman Nee, Ruth Paxson, Andrew Murray, Jessie Penn-Lewis, FB Meyer and AW Tozer. These said many good things but also some confused things.

Unfortunately, some Quaker teachers became prominent in this movement which led to the popularisation of very mystical and unorthodox ideas plus Wesleyan or Oberlin perfectionism (e.g. Robert Pearsall Smith; his wife Hanna Whitall Smith became an even more prominent spokesmen for the movement).

Its better influences included combating the contemporary legalism and dead orthodoxy of Reformed churches and emphasising the ministry of the Holy Spirit. However, the emphasis upon sanctification being based upon a crisis experience and faith led to passivity and a failure to strive against sin; indeed many preachers downplayed or redefined sin. Justification by faith was often completely misunderstood, leading to antinomianism.

In 1870 Smith wrote, *Holiness Through Faith*, which taught a second blessing crisis experience which led to victory over consciousness of sin (common American Holiness teaching). It was through their work and Hanna's book *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (1875) that the Keswick Convention began in 1875. Hanna Whitall Smith taught that one had to progress beyond faith for justification to a second blessing experience where one developed faith for sanctification which resulted in victory. These latter ideas are clearly unscriptural and mystical; often characterised by the phrase, 'Let go and let God'. Smith's teaching did not prevent him having an affair with a young woman.

The movement was criticised by Reformed ministers like JC Ryle for its immediate deliverance from all sin by faith.

#### *Errors*

- Mixing truth with error leading to deception.
- Confusing justification.

- Enabling antinomianism.
- False ideas about sanctification as a second blessing (like Wesleyanism).
- Downplaying actual sins.
- Encouraging mysticism.
- Emotionalism.
- Excessive, uncontrolled exuberance.
- At worst it was mystical.

For more information see my paper, 'The Higher Life Movement'.

### **The Holiness Movement**

This was a 19<sup>th</sup> century movement that grew out of Methodism, centred on its idea of a 'second blessing' following a crisis experience for sanctification and power. It was a reformation of Methodism to cater for the type of meetings experienced in the revivalist frontier Camp Meetings but in urban areas.

This led to the idea of a subjective 'baptism in the Spirit' rather than the Biblical objective experience where saints are spiritually placed in Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Methodists had traditionally taught that this crisis led to sanctified perfection, but the Holiness Movement also saw it leading to gifts and power; it is thus the main Pentecostal precursor. However, in later years Holiness preachers began to teach sinless perfection, eradication of all sinful desire, such as WB Godbey [1833-1920].

The growth of the HM occurred in a time of religious, revivalist fervour; fears/hopes regarding the coming millennium (1900); the rise of many sects and cults; and a period of sustained secular interest in the paranormal, spiritualism and the occult. What it did was to bring these things into the mainline church. Some Holiness preachers were more Biblical and sober, but in general the Holiness Movement brought in the aberrations now present in the Charismatic Movement. In other words, it was a syncretism of the occult and Christianity.

The beginnings were in the famous indulgent US Methodist Camp meetings and a search for instant sanctification; but in time healing, church issues and eschatology became the chief focus. After 1875 Keswick teaching had a big influence and the 'Pentecostal power' of the second blessing was emphasised for spiritual power. Gradually the idea of the baptism of the Spirit for power and tongues as 'initial evidence' developed. By 1890 the Holiness Movement in the US and Keswick in the UK were emphasising the Pentecostal blessing with long tarrying meetings for sanctification or power and a new worship style arose.

Gradually there was a tension between Wesleyans (who taught sinless perfection) and Keswick folk (who taught that sanctification produced power for service; sin could be suppressed but not eradicated). Some, like AB Simpson [1843-1919] tried to bridge this gap in various ways. Eventually multitudes of interpretations and practices developed at the turn of the century.

New churches and denominations began to form out of the HM with accusations of 'sheep-stealing' from Methodists. Further errors of theology and scandalous behaviour also began to appear. BH Irvin taught a third blessing of fire (power) to be distinguished from the second blessing of sanctification. His meetings had shouting & ecstatic behaviour. Others, like the Church of God, taught ethical prohibitions (such as dress style). All were very subjective, even approaching mysticism while some were very legalistic. A few churches adopted a restorationist stance (restoring the church to NT power and structure). There

was also a rise of many black holiness churches, which became the backbone of early Pentecostalism.

*Maria Woodworth-Etter [1844-1924]*

Maria Woodworth-Etter was the most famous preacher. Her meetings had many manifestations, and her experience of spiritual power dated from Quaker meetings. [Many Pentecostals and Charismatics had Quaker backgrounds, such as Wimber.] She was so extreme that she was once put into an asylum by doctors present at her meeting. She would go into motionless trances, with raised hands, for long periods while the meeting carried on and was able to pass on this trance-like state by touch (occultism). She was even called, 'The Voodoo Priestess' and being slain in the Spirit was experienced by mainline denominations through her ministry. She was later found guilty of fraud and serious false prophecies. Though she did not focus on tongues she did later join the Pentecostal Movement.

*Frank Sandford [1862-1948]*

Frank Sandford was another HM preacher who established a healing community which became the pattern Charismatic cult. He originally adopted Keswick style teachings added to Holiness ideas on healing and was trained by Moody as an evangelist. Sandford was one of the first leaders to emphasise the need for Signs and Wonders in 'Christian' churches.

Many flocked to join his work, especially those in need of healing or seeking powerful ministry. While in charge of the cult commune 'Shiloh' in Maine in the late 1890s, he became totally authoritarian and violently abusive. His organisation was the typical pyramid structure with him at the top - God spoke to Sandford, then Sandford taught the people. This was common in the UK Restoration churches. Like others he called himself a prophet, then an apostle, then David, then Elijah and then one of the witnesses of Rev 11. He fleeced member's money to buy luxuries for himself while the community went hungry. Harsh healing methods adopted by Sandford resulted in deaths, especially as he demanded abstention from medical services to aid faith.

We could say much more but space prevents us. Eventually he was imprisoned for kidnapping and manslaughter but even then some followers still called him a perfect man! He was sentenced to 10 years in Atlanta prison. His final address to the community lasted 10 hours. 'Kingdom Press' still publishes his sermons and believes he was a prophet; such is the delusion that comes with unchecked deception. This should be a warning to all.

Sandford is important for numerous reasons. One is that he was the major influence on Charles Parham (Pentecostal pioneer); another is that he epitomises the cultic end of religious authoritarianism. Many similar situations arose afterwards, from Jonestown to less extreme current forms in the Charismatic Movement. No one seems to learn from history; indeed few Christians now bother reading it!

*Summary*

Like many in the Pentecostal Mvt. that followed, the HM spawned a large number of charlatans, authoritarian leaders, abusive preachers, fraudsters, deviant teachers, manipulators of audiences, scandals, evidence of mysticism, occultism and so on. While some men, like AB Simpson, on the fringes may have been more Biblical, very many practitioners led ordinary Christians into extreme forms of deception and occult ministry.

It is in the HM that we see, on a large scale, the adoption of overt forms of occult behaviour and doctrine on the fringes of evangelicalism. It had a huge impact on American church life to this day, though England was less influenced due to the prominence of Keswick Higher-Life teachings over here. Though conservative US denominations were largely untouched

some, such as the Methodists, Baptists and independents, were deeply affected. Many new churches that were spawned in the HM went on to become Pentecostal churches. Occult theology and aberrations were beginning to appear in fringe cults and odd communities and being formally accepted within mainline denominations and in large numbers.

Other 19<sup>th</sup> century Charismatic Movement precursors include, The Oneida Community (one of 120 commune experiments in mid-1800s); Mormons (tongues / healing); 7th Day Adventists (prophecy / healing); Phoebe Palmer; Skye Revival (phenomena); Johann Blumhardt, Dorothea Trudel & Otto Stockmeyer (healing); Irish Revival 1859 (phenomena and raving). In many cases the extreme phenomena mainly affected women.

For more information see my paper, 'The Origins of Pentecostalism'.

### **Jehovah's Witnesses**

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society was founded in the US by Charles Taze Russell in 1881. It was renamed in 1931 under the leadership of JF Rutherford.

These deny the Trinity saying that '*Satan is the originator of the trinity doctrine*'.<sup>37</sup> They centre upon the Father and do not worship the Son at all. The Holy Spirit is merely a divine force not a person. Jesus as God's son was not eternal. Their doctrine is subordinationist (Jesus is below God), similar to Arianism. The son was created by God and existed before he was human as the Word of God or Michael the Archangel. He was then born of a virgin but this was not an incarnation of God. Jesus did not have two natures; the Word became man. Jesus resurrection body was not physical but was a 'spirit body'; his human body was disposed of.

There has been a continual expectation of Armageddon and setting up a kingdom that will be managed by Jesus through the 144,000 (of Rev 14:1) in heaven and men on earth of goodwill.

These people use their own Bible version, which uses false translations of verses to support their heretical position.<sup>38</sup> There are over a million members.

### *Errors*

- Wrong view of Jesus (Arianism).
- Denial of the resurrection.
- Denial of the Trinity.
- Denial of the personality of the Holy Spirit.
- Denial of the immortality of the soul.
- Salvation is by faith in Jesus' ransom, baptism and by evangelising plus a moral life. In other words baptismal regeneration plus meritorious works.
- Cultic.
- Elitist, salvation is only in this church.
- Lord's Supper practised only once a year at Passover and only those who have the inner witness that they are members of the 144,000 elite can participate.
- Using a deliberately twisted Bible translation.
- Claims of authoritarian abuse. Authoritarian control over what to think and do (e.g. blood transfusions are forbidden).

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<sup>37</sup> 'Let God be True', Watchtower Bible & Tract Society, 1946, p100.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Jn 1:1, 'the Word was a god'. Gen 1:1 'active force' instead of 'Spirit'.



- Various teachings have changed over the years as circumstances changed.

### **Jesus Army**

This was a radical sect founded by Noel Stanton [1926-2009] that originally began as a church commune in Bugbrooke (near Northampton) in 1969. Stanton had taken over the local Baptist church in 1957 as lay pastor and received a Charismatic experience, influenced by the US 'Jesus People'. This led to changes in the church, which attracted younger people. Stanton was also associated with many leaders in the 70s House Church Movement.

The Jesus Fellowship, as it was known, increased to about 3,500 members by 2007. The communal aspect at Bugbrooke,<sup>39</sup> which began in 1973 in several large houses, led to much controversy after various scandals, such as splitting families. Later, houses were purchased around the county for communes of workers of between 6 and 60 people. These church households formed the basis of the movement. Households come together to form congregations meeting in a hired venue or a purchased hall. Church businesses were created to provide revenue.

True members make a covenant to join the fellowship, pledging lifelong fealty, while visitors can come to the meetings. Some of these members are residents, others are more intensely associated in financial and personal accountability. Members in the households yield all their income and possessions for sharing.

In 1986 the group was expelled from the Baptist Union for practises such as rebaptism. It was also expelled from the Evangelical Alliance for cultic activity and authoritarianism. In the late 1980s and early 1990s it sought to loosen its style and improve relationships with other churches and was readmitted to the Alliance in 1999.

The fellowship concentrated on street evangelism, which eventually led to the adoption of the name 'The Jesus Army' in 1987. This evangelistic arm used brightly coloured coaches and clothes with various gimmicks. The aggressive evangelism focused upon marginalised people on the streets.

The church disbanded in May 2018 after a collapse in membership following claims of abuse against Stanton and other members in the 1970s. Allegations were given to the Northamptonshire Police of historic sexual abuse by Stanton and others. Several members were found guilty of sexual abuse of children. Noel died in 2009, which led to the accusations coming forward.

### *Errors*

- Arminianism.
- Charismaticism.
- Fetishism and sacramentalism (praying over crosses to be given away as spiritual items, getting people to place washed stones in a pile to represent sin or stress removed etc.).
- Authoritarianism of Stanton.
- New Age ideas.
- Celibacy.
- Abuse.
- Rebaptism (in early stages of its history).

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<sup>39</sup> The New Creation Christian Community.

## **Latter Rain Movement**

This was a 1940s movement manifesting the worst extremes of Pentecostalism, which led to the Healing Movement of the 1950s. Some ideas were absorbed into the Charismatic Movement early on but matured with the Signs & Wonders Mvt. It was outlawed as heresy by the Assemblies of God churches in 1949, going dormant until the late 1980s when it was resurrected through the influence of John Wimber and others. Then the radical theology, occultism and aberrant practices were absorbed into UK Restoration churches. The Toronto Experience and current Charismatic Dominionism are nothing but the flowering of Latter Rain, the fulfilment of the 'new thing', the 'new truth' that God brings today, something not known for 2,000 years.

The main influence was the occult doctrines of Franklin Hall. A rough summary follows:

- God gradually restored lost truths since the Reformation. Latter Rain was the most recent.
- The use of the laying on of hands to impart the Spirit, healing, spiritual gifts and even faith itself. Healing is to be expected; exorcism is normal. Faith can create new realities.
- Fasting for spiritual results. Pagans who fast will get prayers answered while Christians who fail to fast will not see answered prayer. Closing the eyes in prayer destroys faith.
- Men can become immortal by ascending mystical degrees of growth, can hover, fly in space and be free from accidents. Coloured 'immortal' substances rest on those with faith. Raising the left hand enabled believers to smell Jesus and drive insects from houses.
- 'Body-felt salvation' meant that sickness, tiredness and body-odour could be eliminated. He and his disciples wore the same clothes for months.
- Belief in the demonisation of believers.
- Belief in a form of astrology.
- Advocated benefits of UFOs.
- Restoration of the Tabernacle of David: powerful praise & worship, emotionalism, the felt presence of God, singing in the Spirit. There were long periods of unrestrained praise.
- The Church must be restored, perfected, unified and equipped to rule by the five-fold ministries, especially prophets and apostles who rule the church. The use of personal directive prophecy.
- A purified elite group of overcomers will manifest Christ and possess the Spirit without measure, will purge earth of resistance. The leaders of the perfect church will judge the apostate Church.
- The church will experience a second Pentecost and will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles when Christ will appear and be incarnated in the church and glorifying it before the Second Coming.
- Some taught that the 'overcomers' will redeem all creation, restore the earth and eventually overcome death. The church will thus inherit the earth and rule over it from the throne of Christ.

### *Sharon Fellowship*

In North Battleford, Saskatchewan (Canada) in 1947-8, George and Ern Hawtin, Percy Hunt and Herrick Holt applied the teachings of Hall and Branham and became the focal point of Latter Rain practices, experiencing a healing 'revival' with manifestations (somewhat like the Toronto Experience). People travelled far to attend and see these manifestations, while the leaders travelled widely, bleeding other churches. Eventually it became sectarian, elitist and authoritarian; leaders were called apostles and prophets (is

this pattern not common?). After being ousted by the Assemblies of God church, Latter Rain went dormant.

### *Paul Cain*

The overcomers of Latter Rain are now variously called: Joel's Army, the New Breed, the Dread Breed etc. The most extreme (ridiculous) teachings on the overcomers can be seen in Paul Cain's ministry on Joel's Army, which mangles the text of Joel 2.<sup>40</sup>

Other LR teachers included: Bill Britton, and Gordon Lindsay. A key Latter Rain book was *'The Feast of Tabernacles'* by George Warnock, which claimed that the modern church would usher in the antitype of this feast (the Second Coming) by dominating the earth and establishing the kingdom.

Most of the extreme and even crazy ideas manifested in apostate Charismatic churches and movements originated in Latter Rain.

### **Manifest Sons of God**

Basically a type of Branhamism but furthered by many Pentecostal teachers.

An extreme form of Latter Rain, teaching radical forms of restorationism and dominionism. It claimed that there are mystical steps of growth to becoming a perfect son of God, where the final goal is to be God ('one with God' as Christ is). It is the source of the modern Charismatic ideas about immortalised apostles and prophets ruling the world with super powers – invulnerable to bullets, able to fly and walk through walls. Underlying texts are Joel 2 (a super army), Rm 8:19-23 (manifestation of the sons of God) and Rev 12 (the Manchild). The exegesis of these passages is shocking and utterly foolish. It is the source of Paul Cain's teaching on Joel's Army, the Dreaded Breed. John Wimber devoted whole conferences to this theme. Some now teach that the church will become so perfectly powerful that Christ will not need to return.

This branch of Latter Rain developed the idea that the glorified church of overcomers on earth becomes immortal and perfect before the Second Coming, and is the Manchild of Rev 12 which will rule the earth with a rod of iron. As an example of blasphemous arrogance and stupidity one promoter, Sam Fife, believed he had already stopped ageing and when asked his age, would only say, 'I am', explaining that he would not die but was being changed already into an incorruptible life. He is now dead!

After a number of scandals, the movement went to ground in the 50s until resurrected by Wimber and 'Kingdom Theology'. It undergirds the current apostolic & prophetic movement.

Proponents: Sam Fife, Paul Cain, John Robert Stevens, John Wimber, George Warnock, Francis Frangipane, Royal Cronquist and Bill Britton. Leaders influenced by this include: Oral Roberts, Demos Shakarian, David du Plessis, Benson Idahosa, Rick Joyner, Earl Paulk.

### **Messianic Christianity: late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards**

This was another child of the Charismatic Movement. Over time a number of Christian Jews felt awkward in the church while many Gentile Christians were seduced into the effects of Dispensational pro-Israel doctrines. Gradually a new movement of Messianic Christianity was born, producing various sub movements: Jewish (or Hebrew) Roots, Christian Zionism and so forth.

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<sup>40</sup> This army refers to locusts (2:25) and is a judgment from God not a race of super-Christians at the end.

Part of the issue was a focus upon Dispensational Premillennial eschatology instead of the growing Postmillennial Dominionism of most Charismatics. This produced opposite expectations of the end and very different outcomes for Jews.

The results are a very wide range of adopted Judaism in these groups. At one end people change their name to Jewish equivalents, men get circumcised, people meet on Saturday in a Christian synagogue and so on. At the other end is a foolish vibrant support of political Israel, despite its war crimes, interpreting the NT in a Jewish light, focusing upon the OT at the expense of the NT, celebrating Jewish festivals, changing the names of God (G-d) and Jesus (Yeshua), and so on.

This is syncretism of Christianity with a false, fleshly religion that is not Biblical and not even historic Judaism. It destroys real evangelicalism and makes Israel an idol instead of centring upon Christ. It ruins Biblical interpretation by reading the Bible in Jewish terms. It ruins true interpretation of OT prophecy (ignoring NT interpretation of it). It is a very dangerous deception foisted upon the church by Satan. Some of the leaders in this movement are genuine false prophets/teachers and very evil people who are guilty of gross sins. Not a few have been charlatans out to make money by deception.

One curious factor is that the support for modern Israel and Jews is misplaced since it is now proven by history and genetics that the Jews in leadership in Israel, and the majority in the world (Ashkenazi Jews), have no physical connection to Abraham whatsoever but emanate from Khazaria, having converted en masse in the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century. Neither is modern Judaism<sup>41</sup> connected to the Torah<sup>42</sup> but it is based upon the Babylonian Talmud that is the most foul, wicked and blasphemous set of documents in the world<sup>43</sup> written by the very enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees.

### **Methodism**

Founded by evangelist John Wesley, though he actually remained within the Church of England, but it formally separated in 1791. The movement was originally to promote genuine holiness. The name was applied to the Wesleys and others in the Holy Club at Oxford in 1729 due to their disciplined methodical practices. John Wesley adopted this willingly though the term had earlier been applied to Amyraldians in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The societies that John Wesley founded were part of the Church of England and the term 'Methodist' originally included Reformed people like George Whitefield (a friend of the Wesleys) and Lady Selina Huntingdon.

The spread of Methodist societies followed the evangelism of Wesley in his many missions and the effects of the Great Awakening, which created a religious fervour in America and Britain. The first society was formed in 1739 in London and lay preachers were established after 1741. Regulations for the society were drawn up in 1743. From 1746 the societies were arranged in circuits with associated leaders managing them. In the American frontier this gave rise to the famous 'circuit riders', itinerant preachers on horseback. After Wesley's death the societies were placed in set districts. In 1784 the Wesleyan Connexion was established in law. In 1787 Wesley's chapels were registered as dissenting meeting houses under the Toleration Act (1559). After Wesley's death there were a large number of secession movements beginning in 1797 with the New Connexion. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century some of these groups joined together, forming the United Methodist Church in 1907 or the Methodist Church of Great Britain in 1932.

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<sup>41</sup> Excepting Torah Jews who follow Moses not the Talmud.

<sup>42</sup> The Pentateuch.

<sup>43</sup> Not only does it blaspheme Jesus in extreme ways but it teaches that Jews can lie to, cheat, defraud, rape, steal and murder Gentiles as well as commit bestiality, incest and paedophilia.

Essentially Methodism is an Arminian system of salvation instead of Calvinistic (Reformed). This Wesleyan system is often called Evangelical Arminianism by theologians because it has a slightly better view of depravity than Continental Arminians.<sup>44</sup> This leads to salvation by the human will instead of sovereign grace and faith.

In historical practice Methodism has been at the forefront of liberal tendencies and complete apostasy; it also spawned the licentious camp meetings, the Holiness Movement, New Thought and Pentecostalism in America. It is now close to extinction in the UK.

John Wesley is widely championed by churches as a hero but a close analysis of his life and doctrine can only lead one to the conclusion that he was not a genuine believer. Indeed, he wrote at the end of his life stating that he never loved God at all. He denied and vilified major Biblical doctrines, such as God's sovereignty in salvation or predestination. He denied Limited Atonement. He affirmed the spiritual abilities of sinners. He taught salvation by works. He believed that sincere heathen could get to heaven without knowing Christ (like Billy Graham). He misunderstood justification by faith. He affirmed perfectionism. He watered down the doctrine of sin. He affirmed the Roman belief in Mary's continued virginity. He believed in baptismal regeneration. He contradicted himself continually. He believed in ghosts and pagan spirits. He allowed extreme mysticism and Pentecostal-type behaviour in his meetings. He appointed women to teach in the church. He allowed prayers for the dead. His personal testimony is flawed and based upon Moravian Pietism. He was ecumenical. He denied vows. He committed fraud and libel. He committed plagiarism.

[For details see my paper, 'Was John Wesley a true believer?'.]

In summary, Methodism is an Arminian church movement that also appropriates liberal tendencies and unbiblical doctrines. It is no surprise that it directly led to so many equally unorthodox church movements.

### **Mormonism**

'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints', a religion founded in the US in 1830 by Joseph Smith Jr [1805-1844]. It resulted from a series of visions the confused Smith received. 'Personages' appeared to him telling him that all the religions were wrong. His writings on his first vision are contradictory. One of the personages later appeared to him as the angel 'Moroni'. This deceiving spirit told Smith where to find golden plates inscribed with America's history and the purpose of God, plus two stones called 'Urim' and 'Thummim', which would enable Smith to translate the plates. Four years later he found the plates. The resultant translation was the *Book of Mormon*. Other scared books followed.

In addition Mormons advocated the role of living prophets, chiefly centred in church presidents. NB:

- '*When compared with the living oracles those books [Bible, Book of Mormon, Book of Doctrines and Covenants] are nothing to me; those books do not convey the word of God direct to us now, as do the words of a prophet or a man bearing the holy priesthood in our day and generation. I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in the books.*' Brigham Young,<sup>45</sup> *Conference Report*, (Wilford Woodruff, president), October 1897, p22-23.

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<sup>44</sup> The Arminian Remonstrants denied total depravity completely, making man able. Wesley admitted depravity but said that prevenient grace was given to all to overcome this if they willed to.

<sup>45</sup> (1801–77) Mormon leader after Joseph Smith's death in Illinois in 1844, Young became the dominant figure of Mormonism, leading the migration west to Salt Lake City, ruling over the new community with autocratic firmness.

- *'Here are the living oracles of God, and they are worth more to the Later-Day saints than all the Bibles, all the Books of Mormon and of all the Books of Doctrines and Covenants that are written. ... The living oracles of the church are worth more than all of them.'* Marriner W Merrill (Quorum of the 12), Conference Report, October 1897, p6.
- *'We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrines and Covenants, but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom.'* George Q Cannon (First Presidency), Gospel Truth, p252.
- *'The Lord said of the President of the Church, "His word ye shall receive as if from mine own mouth" (Doctrines and Covenants 21:5). ... That which would be of greatest importance to you would be the words of the current President of the Church, for his words are directed to our day and our needs.'* Ezra Taft Benson, Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p137-138.

In a later vision John the Baptist purportedly appeared to Smith and another person, laid hands on them and ordained them, conferring on them the Priesthood of Aaron. This is full of heresy. First, Lk 16 tells us that the dead cannot contact the living, so this appearance is certainly satanic. Secondly, Hebrews explains that the Aaronic priesthood is finished and that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The early history of the religion is long, complex and full of melodrama; Hollywood has even made movies of it. Smith was brutally murdered in 1844 after criminal offences. Brigham Young [1801-1877] took over, the president of the 'Twelve Apostles'. The state of Illinois demanded that the Mormons leave so they headed west on a long trek in 1846 ending up at Salt Lake valley in 1847. Salt Lake City became the Mormon headquarters. Young was less of a teacher than an administrator, and he built the work up and sent out evangelists; many converts moved to Salt Lake City. He also had 20 wives and fathered 47 children. However, some splinter groups developed, such as those that did not accept Young's leadership (e.g. 'Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' based in Missouri). Utah became the 45<sup>th</sup> state in 1896.

Mormons suffered great hostility from non-Mormons, often provoked. In a bad case a Mormon leader, John Doyle Lee, murdered 137 Arkansas emigrants passing through Utah (the Mountain Meadows Massacre, 1857), for which he was executed. Brigham Young was complicit in this, at least as an accessory.

Mormons worship angels and a plurality of gods. The Father had a material body. The Father God of the Bible is the God of Earth but there are many gods of other worlds. Each god gives birth to other gods. While advocating many gods, early Mormonism taught the Trinity, though Joseph Smith also contradicted this in sermons. The gods were men before they became gods: *'As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become'*; [Lorenzo Snow, 5<sup>th</sup> president of Mormonism.] While Jesus is a son of God, Mormons deny that he was God; he was the *'firstborn spirit child'*.

The church is a complex mix of Old Covenant religion, Freemasonry, Catholicism, paganism and the Gospel. It has an Aaronic Priesthood and a Melchizedek Priesthood, of which the latter includes the presidency. Officers include apostles, priests, high priests, patriarchs and elders. The temporal affairs are governed by the Aaronic Priesthood through the offices of bishop, priest, deacon and teacher. Three high priests, the president and two counsellors, constitute the First Presidency, with supreme control. The president passes down teachings given him by God in direct revelation. Below the president is the council of the 12 apostles, who govern the regions. Evangelism is under the First Quorum of the Seventy. Mormons are expected to dedicate two years of their lives to missionary work, supported by outside sponsors.

It has multiple heresies:

### *God*

- God is said to be the Father, Jesus and the Spirit but the Book of Mormon describes God as One, revealed in the Father, Son and Spirit (i.e. modalism). Smith, however, preached differently claiming a plurality of gods and the separation of the Father and the Son as well as the Spirit.
- The Father and the Son both possess material bodies.
- The Father is the God of the Earth but there are multiple gods spread around the universe.
- Each god is begotten by other gods in succession. The Father is the first in this line.
- Gods were men before they became gods.

### *Jesus Christ*

- Jesus is the Son of God but is not God exclusive of all others.
- Young taught that Jesus was not born of the Father (as many Mormons) but was born by Adam ('Adam-God doctrine'). Yet modern Mormon literature teaches the virgin birth; Young never taught this.

### *Salvation*

- Christ's atonement effects two salvations. 1) General: immortality granted to all people by Christ's resurrection. 2) Individual: conditional on adhering to the Mormon articles three and four (obeying the Gospel, faith in Jesus, repentance, baptism by immersion, laying on of hands to receive the Spirit).
- Thus everyone is resurrected from temporal death but only those who obey the Mormon laws are resurrected to spiritual life. Thus faith, repentance, baptism and enduring to the end are meritorious works. Mormon talk of salvation by grace is superficial.
- 'Blood atonement'. This is the teaching of Young that a man might be killed to save his soul, denied by Smith. Numerous sins are credited as being worthy of death, including murder, adultery, marrying a black person, apostasy and lying. While Mormons now deny this, it was only stopped when large number of non-Mormons moved into Utah.

### *Man*

- All people had a pre-earth life in the spirit, as spirit children of the Father.
- They gained a physical body on earth.
- They prove their worthiness to be saved by keeping the commandments.
- At death they attain resurrection.

### *Eschatology*

- There is a gathering of the ten lost tribes of Israel.
- Mormons are the gathering of the Ephraimites.
- The New Jerusalem will be physically built on Earth.
- There is a millennium when two resurrections occur. Christ returns and the righteous are resurrected. At the beginning of the millennium the wicked are destroyed by fire. The spirits of the dead reside in purgatory where they atone for their sins through suffering. After the millennium there is a second resurrection, the wicked are raised, Satan is released and the wicked war against Jesus who defeats them.
- In the judgment the earth is dissolved to be resurrected as a celestial body like a star.

- There are four final classes of people: 1) the sons of perdition – the devil, fallen angels and humans who have committed the unpardonable sin. These are destroyed in the Lake of Fire. Those who are saved spend eternity in one of three kingdoms. 2) The highest is the Celestial Kingdom for the righteous. They live forever as gods and procreate spirit children with their wives married in a Mormon temple. 3) The second is the Terrestrial Kingdom on a planet somewhere. This is for the lukewarm or those who rejected the Gospel on earth but accepted it in the afterlife (cf. Roman Catholic purgatory). 4) The third is the Telestial Kingdom located on another planet where those remaining abide; i.e. the lawless, the wicked who after suffering are offered salvation. This kingdom has the biggest population.

### *Marriage*

- Celestial Marriage: to be blessed one must be married in a Mormon temple. People that don't do this can expect to only be a lower angel and not a god.

### *Authority*

- It denies the authority and exclusivity of the Bible and has its own sacred books 1) *The Book of Mormon* by Smith, reconsidered as the word of God. 2) *The Pearl of Great Price*, by Smith, which contains the articles of faith. 3) *The Book of Doctrine and Covenants*, (1876) containing revelations by Smith and later leaders.
- There is a doctrine of continual revelation through its leaders (chiefly the president).

### *Church*

- Elitism: only the Mormon Church is the true church.
- The church boasted 6.5 million members in 1987.
- The church is rich getting about \$2 billion per year generated by tithes and businesses.

### *Sacraments*

- Baptismal regeneration (baptism is necessary for salvation).
- Only immersion is acceptable.
- Baptism of infants is forbidden because children do not commit sin.
- Baptism for the dead: this is necessary for the souls who died before Mormonism and appeared in 1830. This must take place in a temple and be witnessed by at least three people. To facilitate this, the Mormons have the most complete genealogical records in the world.
- Lord's Supper: Mormons partake after the age of eight following baptism. It is celebrated weekly. Water is used instead of wine.

### *Temple rituals*

There are many rituals performed in the temple; these include: baptism for the dead, confirmation for the dead, washings, the ceremony of the veil and many more. These are called 'endowments'. To enter the temple you need a recommendation from the branch president.

The rituals involve: temple vestments, symbolic gestures, various liturgies, and oaths are taken not to betray temple secrets. Originally the oaths were punishable by having your throat cut, tongue ripped out or breast cut open, but this was modified in the 1990s. Women originally had to veil their faces but this has now changed, but women are still forbidden to enter the priesthood.



These rites were directly borrowed from Freemasonry; Smith was a Mason from 1842 along with 1200 Mormons.

### *Structure*

- It is Cultic.
- It is authoritarian.

### *Ethics*

- It was originally polygamous until 1890.
- It was originally racist.
- Mormons abstain from wine, strong drink, tobacco, and hot drinks.

### *Summary*

Mormonism is a shocking ragbag of utter nonsense. It is amazing how credulous thousands of people can be.

It is utterly unscriptural, and denies the authority and teaching of the Bible. It twists Biblical doctrines, such as atonement or the Gospel, into appalling charades of the truth. Virtually every doctrine is abhorrent and false. Its practices are aberrant and unbiblical. Its history is riddled with iniquity and many imprisonments of church leaders. It was even banished from Illinois.

The pagan concepts regarding the doctrine of God and Jesus are something out of science fiction and beggar belief.

This is a dangerous and shocking religion. Yet its assiduous missionaries, usually young men, continue to convince gullible people attracted by apparent morality. There are over 30,000 Mormon missionaries active in the world, dwarfing any Protestant missionaries.

### **New Thought**

Based on the ideas of PP Quimby [1802-1866]. Developed by Warren Felt Evans (the thinker) and Julius Dresser (the communicator) in the US around 1890.

It was a mind science religion based on Swedenborgianism, Platonic dualism (spirit better than matter) and Mesmerism (hypnotism) e.g. sin, sickness and disease only exist in the mind. A dangerous mixture of the occult with Christianity. Quimby greatly influenced Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science.

PP Quimby [1802-1866] was the key mentor of the Mind Science sects: Christian Science, Unity, Religious Science, Divine Science and New Thought. Quimby practised Mesmerism (hypnotism) and created a syncretism of Christianity with the occult. The prime focus was on healing based upon the claim that sin, sickness and disease existed solely in the mind.

His followers broke away from the authoritarianism of Christian Science to create the other sects. New Thought was developed by Methodist Warren Felt Evans [1817-1889] and Julius Dresser [1838-1893]. Evans also began to imbibe the ideas of Swedenborg. Dresser was a great communicator who spread the teachings.

The theology was based on Platonic dualism, spirit is superior to matter. Man is divine and capable of infinite possibilities through constructive thinking.

God is immanent in the world; divinity is in all things (Pantheism). Jesus is merely a teacher who taught that God's kingdom was within all people. They reject Jesus as the Son

of God and the only way to salvation. Sin is just succumbing to illusory matter. All sins and sicknesses are illusions of the mind; right thinking fixes them. This requires right knowledge (like Gnosticism).

### **The New Apostolic Reformation / Church (NAR)**

This radical, authoritarian subset of the Charismatic Movement would claim to worship Jesus but in practice the focus of their attention is upon apostles and prophets. In the worst cases, teachers in this movement even claim that the rule of apostles over the world in the future eradicates the need for Christ to return to earth and bring about the end, such is the hubris of men to make apostles greater than Jesus Christ. It is radical Charismaticism focused on men.

One of the chief pioneers of this movement, largely centred in America, is C Peter Wagner, one time associate of John Wimber and church growth specialist. Other leaders include: Rick Joyner (a very serious heretic) and Kim Clement.

### *Errors*

- It emphasises subjective experience over true doctrine.
- It is mystical.
- It centres on man-made apostles; i.e. authoritarianism. Frequently the teaching and demands of such apostles are contrary to the Bible. Submission to an apostle is fundamental.
- Church structure is focused on the dominant leadership of apostles and prophets. Under these are evangelists, pastors and teachers. This means that during most of church history the church structure has been wrong. I.e. elitism, only the NAR is correct.
- Acceptance of new revelation from prophets over and above Scripture. NAR prophecies are frequently found to be false, but this is fudged in various ways.
- Seeking of miracles and satisfaction with fake ones.
- A focus on Charismatic spiritual warfare which is unscriptural; thus fighting 'territorial spirits' by various strategies etc. Problems in society are caused by demons and Christians must intervene to regain control of society. The Gospel cannot proceed until demonic influences have been defeated by apostolic forces and their delegates.
- One goal is to dominate society. As apostles gain more and more power, there will be a global revival putting the world under the control of apostles. This is God's kingdom on Earth – denial of the real spiritual kingdom of Jesus.

### **New Calvinism**

Over time, many of the generation of people converted in the Jesus Revival of the early 70s became tired of the various false religions and sects, particularly Charismatic ones, that they had been immersed in, and turned to something more substantial. They turned to Calvinistic theology but divorced from Reformed tradition, which in many cases was too formal, lifeless and dull for them. Gradually these folk began to coalesce together into a general movement that had no centre or headquarters and became known as New Calvinists.

Since many of these folk had been Arminians before, they failed to understand the theology and history of Calvinism, or to read Calvin's works other than his *Institutes*, and turned their Arminianism into a sort of Amyraldism. They accepted election and predestination but denied Limited Atonement and the effects of Total Depravity. Thus many of these people taught that while God elected people to salvation, he also loved everyone, gave

everyone common grace and favour and sent Jesus to die for everyone, failing to understand that these concepts denied Calvinism and Biblical theology.

Some of the more famous preachers also began to demonstrate the effects of holding antinomian views, while a few even showed vulgarity of speech in their sermons (e.g. Mark Driscoll).

### *Neo-Calvinists*

The leaders of this aspect are Tim Keller and Gabe Lyons. The focus of this group is the sovereignty of God over creation emphasising the cultural mandate and the restoration of creation. For Keller, the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of the church is not the most urgent church function, rather it is making this world a better place. The historic theologian they look most to is Abraham Kuyper.

Another branch of New Calvinists began to teach various aspects of mysticism with not a few recommending Roman Catholic mystical authors and practices thus encouraging ecumenism.

Many of the New Calvinists have made alliances with the Charismatic Movement and describe themselves as Reformed Charismatics.

Leaders include: John Piper, Mark Dever, Tim Keller, Albert Mohler, CJ Mahaney, Kevin DeYoung, Mark Driscoll, Ligon Duncan III, John Armstrong, John MacArthur, Phil Johnson, and others.

### *Errors*

- Amyraldism.
- Denial of Limited Atonement.
- Denial of Irresistible Grace.
- Denial of Total Depravity in practice. Essentially it has a Wesleyan (Evangelical Arminianism) idea of depravity; i.e. men are depraved but all men have access to a prevenient, common, grace that they can chose to apprehend to believe the Gospel.
- Denial of God's immutability (he loves sinners now but hates them in hell).
- Mysticism.
- Antinomianism.
- Charismaticism.

For more information see my paper: 'New Calvinism is not like Calvin'.

### **Noahidism**

Noahides (also Noachides) are those who follow the Noahide laws, which were the supposed commandments given to Noah after the flood, as speculated by Jewish rabbis. It is usually considered that there are seven specific laws [the prohibition of: idolatry, murder, stealing and kidnapping, sexual immorality, blasphemy, eating flesh from a live animal plus the requirement to establish honest laws and the policing of them]. Jews consider that Gentiles, in order to be considered as righteous brethren, must abide by these laws, though there are many discrepancies as to how this is to be fulfilled or what the penalties of failure are. Six of these laws were supposedly given to Adam in Eden (drawn out by eisegesis from Gen 2:16); the dietary law and murder appear in Gen 9:4-6. The 613 commandments of the later Mosaic Law contained these Noahide laws.

Rabbinic Judaism has never adjudicated any cases under Noahide law and scholars disagree whether it is part of the Halakha ('Jewish Law'). Some Gentile communities, living in proximity to Jews, have signed a formal acceptance of these laws to keep the peace. There has also been an acceptance of them by the US Congress.

The symbol of the modern Noahide Movement is the rainbow, which is also the symbol of many New Age groups. There are various Noahide organisations and most call themselves 'b'nei noach' or 'sons of Noah' ('ben' = son, 'bat' = daughter).

### *Critique*

This sect of Judaism is just another false religion. It is patently false for these reasons (and we here avoid reference to the New Testament):

- The basis of Noahidism is the Talmud and rabbinic speculation, particularly Maimonides (medieval Jewish scholar) who even includes Muslims within this religion. This is a shaky foundation since various rabbis had different opinions on what constituted Noahide law. [See Appendix One]<sup>46</sup>
- The authority for this sect, therefore, rests upon the interpretation of vague Genesis texts by the Talmud.
- If the Talmud is false, then Noahidism is false.
- The Babylonian Talmud is clearly false and is, in fact, filled with blasphemy and wickedness (inc. the encouragement of paedophilia).
- Ergo: Noahidism is false.
- Furthermore, how are Noahides saved? There is no mechanism for salvation except meritorious works, which Noah did not agree with. Noah found grace (Gen 6:8). Noah's salvation was based upon grace given by God not human works. Since Noahidism is based upon human works, there is no salvation in it.
- The Torah, which is accepted by Noahides, also points to the need of a divinely sent deliverer (Deut 18:15) and it is he that Noahides must listen to. This is Christ.
- All the Levitical offerings speak of a bloody sacrifice to come with the Messiah that would give real value to the animal sacrifices (i.e. the cross). They did not have value in themselves or the sacrifices of Gentiles would have equal value, obviating the distinction of Judaism. The essence of Judaism was based in the Messiah to come; without the Messiah Judaism has no value at all. Jesus is that Messiah and fulfils all the OT qualifications and prophecies (e.g. Isa 53).
- The idolatry understood by Noahidism includes Christianity. Christianity is idolatry to observers of Noahide laws. This is because Judaism and Noahidism emphasises the unity of God and denies the Trinity; thus Christianity is seen as polytheistic.

Without doubt this is just another modern deception seeking to attach to itself some credibility by claiming the support of the father of the post-deluvian earth. It will lead, like all other deceptions, to hell since it offers a false salvation based on human works and not divine grace.

The purpose of the Noahide Laws is to bridge the gap between Judaism (Talmudism) and Christianity with a view to infiltrating and debasing Christianity. It is the product of the same people (Pharisees) that were the enemies of Jesus.

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<sup>46</sup> Maimonides states in *Mishneh Torah* [The Laws of Kings, 8:11] that a Gentile who observes the Noahide commands becomes a 'Righteous Gentile' and has earned a place in the world to come; so also the Talmud [*Sanhedrin* 105b]. However, this is the case only if they follow the laws because they consider them to be divine and not just because they are good rational rules for living. [*Mishneh Torah Shoftim*, The Laws of Kings, 8:14.] There is also an implicit reference to the authority of the Torah in all this as revealing the divine origin of Noahide laws.

Freemasonry also references the Noahide laws. It should be understood that Freemasonry is Judaism for Gentiles, a bridge for Talmudists to gain more control in western society.

### *Appendix*

- The Medieval scholar Maimonides [*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings 10:6] adds the commandment forbidding the coupling of different kinds of animals and the mixing of trees. In his *Mishnah Torah*, he interpreted the prohibition against homicide as including a prohibition against abortion. [*Mishnah Torah Shoftim*, Laws of Kings and their wars 9:6.]
- Rabbi David ben Solomon ibn Abi Zimra (Radbaz), contemporary with Maimonides, added castration and sorcery [*Sanhedrin* 56b.].
- Rabbi Saadia Gaon (10<sup>th</sup> c.) added tithes and levirate marriage.
- Rav Nissim Gaon (11<sup>th</sup> c.) included listening to God's Voice, knowing God, serving God and religious acts which can be understood through human reasoning.
- Rabbi Nissim ben Reuben Gerondi (14<sup>th</sup> c.) added the command of charity.
- *Asarah Maamarot* by Rabbi Menahem Azariah of Fano (Rema mi-Fano, 16<sup>th</sup> c.) avers thirty commandments, the latter twenty-three are extensions of the original seven, which includes prohibitions on various forms of sorcery, as well as incest and bestiality. Shmuel ben Hophni Gaon (10<sup>th</sup> c.) also lists thirty Noahide Commandments. He includes the prohibition of suicide and false oaths, as well as the imperatives related to prayer, sacrifices and honouring one's parents.
- Modern Rabbi Aaron Lichtenstein lists 66 instructions.
- Rabbi Harvey Falk has suggested that much work remains to be done in order to properly identify all of the Noahide Commandments, their divisions and subdivisions.

### *Summary*

Noahidism is not Biblical but is manufactured to sound Biblical. It cannot provide salvation and anyone trusting in it will be lost (some Charismatic 'Christians' influenced by Judaism have gone over to it). It is actually a springboard used by Talmudists to gain more influence in Gentile societies and is gaining ground in America.

### **Oneness Pentecostalism**

This denies the Trinity. God is not a Trinity of equal persons but one person manifested in three different modes (modalism) in different times. It is similar to ancient Sabellianism and Modal Monarchianism.

These Pentecostals refuse to baptise people in the name of the Trinity and baptise in the name of Jesus only.

### **Pentecostalism**

Multiple heresies are associated with this movement, based on introducing occult forms and mysticism. It arose from an earlier US Methodism and Holiness (mystical/healing) tradition. There is an emphasis on the Baptism of the Spirit, being an emotional, mystical experience after conversion to give claimed spiritual gifts (e.g. tongue speaking), which then dominate the church. Also emphasises prophecy and claimed healings.

There are many Pentecostal denominations showing a wide variety; Black churches tend to be Pentecostal. Though it is a heretical sect, sadly there are many Christians within it.

Evaluating Pentecostalism is a huge subject which we can only dip into here to discover key fundamental facts.

Pentecostalism was the modern coalescence and theological codification of centuries of attempts to bring occult phenomena and mystical practices into an 'evangelical' denomination. Gradually it developed its own variant of theology to account for tongues, prophecy, healing, deliverance, apostles, prophets and so on. Of course it fragmented very quickly spawning untold numbers of sects which emphasised this or that aspect. From the very start Toronto-type phenomena were present at Azusa Street, though this is often deliberately obscured. What are the roots?

### *Topeka 'Revival' 1901*

Two things point to the origin. The first was the Topeka 'revival' under ex-Methodist Charles Parham. He formulated the basic theology, especially tongues being the 'initial evidence' of the Baptism in the Spirit [BIS]. He joined the Methodist idea of a second blessing after a faith crisis, with the Holiness focus on healing, tongues and power. Parham also adopted Frank Sandford's Latter Rain type teaching and sought tongues to initiate global revival (speaking to foreigners without learning the language).

After founding a 'healing home' in Topeka and a magazine, a small group accepted him as a prophet. One member, Agnes Ozman, spoke in tongues after Parham laid hands on her. She also had a halo round her head and spoke nothing but tongues for three days. Though not the first, she was the most famous early tongue-speaker. Parham received the gift later after 'tarrying'.

Many followed after tarrying all night for it; some began to laugh uncontrollably. The press had a field day with this giving it much publicity, especially after another 'revival' in 1903. By 1906 Parham had several thousand followers, several churches and a Bible school in Houston. His elitism is seen in his preaching that judgment would come to those who did not join him. One of many errors is his teaching that tongues were known languages to aid evangelism; more serious is the denial of water baptism and hell. In confronting demons his abusive and cruel methods led to a woman's death (this is not uncommon). He wrongly predicted the Lord's return and lost authority when he was arrested for sodomy in 1907.

### *Azusa St 'Revival' 1906-10*

The second key factor was the ill-educated William Seymour, a black Holiness preacher who had been to Parham's Bible School. Expectations of power had followed the 1904 Welsh Revival, which itself became disorganised, unbiblical and over-emotional. His pastor (a woman) had received tongues under Parham.

In 1906 he went to preach the need of tongues in LA, though he had not received it himself. Expelled from Holiness churches (who saw their movement fading to a repulsive new doctrine) he taught in a house in Bonnie Brae Street and some spoke in tongues, including Seymour. 312 Azusa St was secured for meetings of the growing flock in 1906. Within days the newspapers were reporting on the strange goings on and 'wild scenes'. Soon 1,000 people were trying to get in the small building, firstly mostly black but later mostly white folk.

Meetings were held three times a day, continuing for hours. Of course in this abandonment they became wild and exotic, many being in a hypnotic state. Seymour rarely preached; when he did he used a few literal words of scripture before challenging people to '*let the tongues come forth*'. All the phenomena associated with Toronto were present here: shaking, slaying in the Spirit, tongues, various physical gestures, gibberish, contortions, sexual impropriety, jerking, shrieking, barking, hooting, crawling etc. Women often lay on the floor for hours; blankets were kept ready to cover their nakedness (another common early feature). Men would jump, women would dance. In the midst there were people attacking the abuses, while everyone sang different melodies, rhythms and words. It was utter chaos.

Seymour would sit behind empty shoe-boxes, keeping his head inside one to pray! Frank Bartleman said that greetings and human contact was avoided in order to concentrate on God first. To aid this the leaders put their heads under benches in the corner in order to pray! At other times Bartleman simply lay on the makeshift platform while 'God' controlled the meetings. Sometimes the preachers on the platform fell and tangled their feet up in their chairs or collapsed on the piano. But there were worse things.

Added to the Holiness and Parham influences, the meeting worship style was based on Black African-American slavery traditions - expressive praise, shouting, dancing and the gifts. Most were poor, uneducated people. Women would wail and scream or cry out in tongues. Men would fall en masse like dead trees or rush in crowds to the front. This attracted people from occult and voodoo backgrounds. The bedlam opened the door for witches, mediums, spiritualists and free-love folk. On visiting, Parham was so incensed by what he described as '*animalism*' and '*all kinds of spells*' that he said, '*God is sick at His stomach*'. Spiritualists and mediums from all over Los Angeles began to attend the meetings and even contributed their seances and trances to the meetings. Although this disturbed Seymour, he could not control it. Frank Bartleman said that there were so many spiritualists, hypnotists and crooks involved in the meetings that people were afraid that the devil would get them, and Bartleman was a Pentecostal supporter, not a critic. Parham continued to discredit Azusa Street throughout his life. He called it a seduction of the Devil, a deceptive counterfeit, magic and an error. He said that the manifestations in Seymour's work were down to hypnotists and familiar spirits; yet people came from all over the world to experience it, making the message global. [Shades of Toronto and Pensacola.]

From this point Pentecostalism fragmented over and over again, beginning with Seymour and Parham publicly criticising each other. The movement became an object of scandal and derision amongst evangelical churches, even radical Holiness churches. People favouring Pentecostalism were removed from membership. Godly Brethren leader GH Lang wrote vehemently against it while Campbell Morgan (predecessor of Martyn Lloyd-Jones) called it, '*the last vomit of Satan*'. However, various leaders set up Pentecostal churches worldwide and missionaries went everywhere, taking the excesses with them. Jessie Penn-Lewis could say that everywhere in the world, they inflicted division and separation among Christians.

It is the most fragmented religious movement; Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan says there are 11,000 denominations. Claims that early Pentecostalism was tolerant of race is a lie. Whites left claiming that the blacks controlled the leadership; Seymour asked the Hispanics to leave and later wrote laws refusing office to anyone not of African-American stock. Even Seymour's closest colleagues did not remain united. Two of Seymour's female aids (Lum and Crawford) crippled his ministry when they took his mailing list and journal to Portland. Another leader was expelled and co-founded the Assemblies of God in 1914. Seymour later called himself a bishop.

This is the key root of Pentecostalism. With the First World War the mission degenerated and after Seymour and his wife died, the building was sold to compensate for non-payment of taxes. Almost everything in popular Christian anecdote about the glory and manifestation of God in Azusa St is a lie.

Warnings from this include:

- No place, or very little, given to the Bible. Teaching virtually non-existent. Truth ignored.
- No focus upon Christ. Focus on tongues. Central place given to testimonies.

- Tongues treated as prophecy when interpreted.
- No self-control; no control of meetings; severe aberrations allowed to continue. Occultism abounding.
- Serious miscarriages of ethics and perversion of doctrine.

There is good reason why Pentecostalism was isolated and marginalised by evangelical churches for 60 years until the Charismatic Movement opened the doors to it.

For more information see my paper, 'The origins of Pentecostalism'.

### **The Brethren (originally 'Plymouth Brethren')**

In fact the Brethren originated in Dublin but were named 'Plymouth Brethren' when their first formal congregation was formed in Plymouth in 1831. The original desire was a return to the simplicity of the early church (as many other sects).<sup>47</sup> It was a protest against the dead formalism of the Anglican Church.

Some brethren met in Dublin for breaking bread and prayer, such as Edward Cronin, AN Groves, John Vesey Parnell (Lord Congleton), John Gifford Bellett and John Nelson Darby. They decided that there should be no clergy in churches. Interest was generated and many joined them. Darby became the acclaimed teacher of the group that was characterised by earnestness, evangelism, devotion and a desire to understand prophecy. Groves, seeing Darby's prominence, wisely warned about developing the danger of legalism, which they had withdrawn from.

Others joined such as Francis Newman and BW Newton, who started a ministry in Plymouth which grew in size. Darby visited the church intending to change some of its customs in 1845. He then initiated a breakaway group in 1847. Then he attacked Newton's teaching on Christ's humanity. Newton withdrew this teaching and recanted but tensions continued.

Two members of the Plymouth church applied for fellowship at Bethesda Chapel, Bristol where George Muller and Henry Craik were joint pastors. Some claimed these Plymouth disciples were heretics, having sat under Newton but Muller and Craik were determined to make their own decision. Unsatisfied, Darby pressed for division and those who followed him broke away. From that time the Brethren became two separate groups: the Open Brethren, maintaining the original format, and the Exclusive Brethren (the Darbyites) who became more centralised and separatist.

The Exclusives also had several divisions through the extremist teachings of James Taylor (d. 1970). Other groups were more like Open Brethren.

The Open Brethren suffered a split in 1889 after proposals for changes in a journal called 'Needed Truth'; the breakaway group called themselves 'Needed Truth'. As it became increasingly centralised, many broke away with some returning to the Open Brethren, which introduced members with Needed Truth ideas. Assemblies affected by this began to refuse other than their own members a place at the Lord's table and practice separation from other Christians.

### *Principles include*

- Weekly breaking of bread where members are free to lead in thanksgiving, praise and prayer or give an exhortation as appropriate.

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<sup>47</sup> E.g. the Quakers, the Christadelphians, the Restorationists.



- No clergy.
- Recognition of teachers by their ministry.
- Some are set apart for full time ministry or evangelism.
- In theory, different views on eschatology are accepted but in practice most Brethren became Dispensationalists after Darby and William Kelly cemented errors obtained from the Edward Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church in London and certain prophetic conferences.
- Open Brethren practice believer's baptism while Exclusive Brethren observe infant baptism.

Brethren produced many great missionaries starting with Groves who went to Baghdad and then India. This ministry developed into the Christian Missions to Many Lands. Brethrenism also produced many fine teachers that published huge numbers of books that held a great influence on wider churches, despite their certain errors (Dispensationalism or over-preoccupation with symbolism), which Spurgeon called 'Plymouthism'. RL Dabney wrote a critique of these, which can be found in his '*Discussions*'. Some men were both missionaries and teachers, such as GH Lang.

Up till about the mid-1980s the Brethren (there are various sub-sets) were a prominent minority on the UK church horizon; today they are on the verge of extinction with Gospel Halls closing and being converted to houses all over the country. This is the case with all the meeting places that I am aware of in my town and many others. Numerous young Brethren members moved into Charismatic churches and the church declined as the old members die off.

While the Brethren are a sect and while they have some doctrinal errors, their devotion to God and his word means that many of them did fine works and much can be learned from them if read with discernment.<sup>48</sup> In a period when most orthodox churches were dead and dusty, Brethrenism produced many fine teachers and many godly people.

### *Problems*

- Elitism.
- Sectarianism
- Dispensationalism.

### **Quakers [the Religious Society of Friends]**

A Christian sect founded by George Fox c.1650 and devoted to peaceful principles. They reject formal ministry, creeds, sacraments, clergy and all set forms of worship (liturgy).

Central to the Quakers' belief is the doctrine of the 'Inner Light', or a subjective sense of Christ's direct working in the soul; in other words, mysticism. This sometimes featured trembling or quaking experiences during meetings, hence the (originally derisive) term 'Quaker'.

By 1660 there were more than 20,000 converts, and missionaries were at work in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the American colonies. They continued to grow in number, despite severe penalisation from 1662 to 1689 for refusing to take oaths, attend Anglican services, or pay tithes.

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<sup>48</sup> When AW Pink wrote his book on sanctification, he affirmed that the Reformed works he consulted were not of much use to him but Brethren works on the subject had been very helpful. I concur with this assessment.

In 1681 William Penn founded the American Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, and Quaker influence in the colony's politics remained paramount until the American War of Independence.

In modern times Quakers have become very liberal in doctrine and are little more than humanists. Meetings tend to be discussion groups and social work.

An apostate, heretical, occult offshoot of Quakerism was the Shakers (originally 'Shaking Quakers' – the shaking was to shake off the Devil) which split off in 1747. Ann Lee, who joined in 1758, declared herself the female Christ and, inspired by visions, established a community near Albany in New York colony in 1774. The movement started to adopt more and more occult ideas (such as spiritualism) and weird practices (such as dancing in a circle around the room). The sect reached a peak of about 6,000 members in the 1820s, but a decline set in after 1860. Today they are known for their furniture.

### **PP Quimby**

The Metaphysical Healing Mvt. developed in the late 1800s following on from the propagation of hypnotism/mesmerism by Franz Mesmer. There were many forms of faith healing using this method, but Phineas Parkhurst Quimby [1802-1866] deserves more attention.

#### *Franz Mesmer*

First we must mention Mesmer. He rediscovered the ancient mystical power of hypnotism in 1774 and recognised it to be an occult force, calling it 'Mesmerism'. *'The history of hypnosis is as ancient as that of sorcery, magic and medicine, to whose methods it belonged. Its scientific history began ... with Franz Mesmer'*.<sup>49</sup> What can be demonstrated to be hypnosis, can be proved to be occult.

[Aside: The power behind Charismatic meetings rests upon subjectivity, passivity and suggestibility – all leading to a hypnotic state when people can be gulled into doing anything a powerful leader suggests. It softens people up with repetitive singing and loud music, followed by authoritarian suggestions by a trusted leader. Secular hypnotists credited Toronto as hypnotism and are able to mimic the phenomena.]

Quimby started healing meetings in New England based upon Mesmerism and healed Mary Baker Eddy in 1862. He taught that sickness was only in the mind and developed 'New Thought' (q.v.) which was a syncretism of Christianity, Gnosticism, the occult, Spiritualism, Platonism, Hinduism and more. In a nutshell he made witchcraft credible in scientific & religious language. This is extremely important as it lays the foundation for the aberrations that followed. It was the beginning of the Mind Sciences becoming acceptable.

Quimby's theology is utterly heretical; it denies the atonement and claims people can become God (mixture of Hinduism and Gnosticism). Faith is the power that creates upon positive confession (the basis of Word Faith) and can lead to success, prosperity and healing. Other groups jumped on this bandwagon, such as Eddy's Christian Science and Unity School of Christianity. With Quimby, occult mind techniques and mystical teachings influenced gullible Christians. Essentially, mind science, visualisation, incubating prayer, mental healing, positive confession etc. are all applications of occult magic – sorcery.

#### *EW Kenyon [1867-1948]*

Kenyon took Quimby's theology and brought it into evangelical churches. He openly admitted to gaining his knowledge from New Thought and other heresies. He stressed

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<sup>49</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica 1997.

revelation knowledge, positive confession, healing, prosperity and becoming God. His writings greatly influenced Pentecostals, the Healing Mvt., Latter Rain, the Charismatic Movement, Restorationism and Word Faith. Hagin and Copeland merely re-iterate Kenyon's errors.

*Agnes Sanford [1897-1982]*

Her teachings are outright paganism, being mostly shamanism (witchcraft). Added to that she was a pantheist and monist – everything is God, God is everything, all is connected. Some teachings are blasphemous, such as identifying Jesus as 'primal energy'. Crazy ideas include that we can create virtue or forgive sins in others by the mind, heal at a distance or we can project God into others. Her ideas came from New Thought, the Mind Sciences and occultism but her influence (esp. for Inner Healing) is huge in the Charismatic Movement.

*Paul (now David) Yonggi Cho*

Having a huge church in Korea gave Cho a loud voice. People who would never have considered his methods suddenly gave him credence. Cho got these methods more directly than the west since he took them from the Soka Gakkai Buddhist roots in his background, whereas Americans received them 2<sup>nd</sup> generation through New Thought – but they are essentially the same. His teaching on Christian faith ('Fourth Dimension') is pure oriental mysticism, as is his incubation of faith, and visualisation of its object. Similar to Theosophy.

*Word (of) Faith [late 1970s +]*

An extreme form of the Charismatic Movement featuring TV evangelists such as Kenneth Copeland, Paul Crouch, John Avanzini, Benny Hinn and Morris Cerullo. It is best known for positive confession, 'name it and claim it' and prosperity ideas.

The founding father was Kenneth Hagin, but he plagiarised the works of EW Kenyon to produce a Pentecostal form of occult mesmerism. This led directly to the Toronto excesses in due course. It is now a part of the Apostolic & Prophetic Movement for global dominion (Triumphal Postmillennialism). Some of the most serious heresies emanate from this movement, which is too diverse to discuss.

### **Religious Science**

This is essentially monism (all is one, opposite of dualism). God is the impersonal self that becomes personalised in humanity; an impersonal mind. Individual minds are like rivers flowing from a central source (god). Thus humanity and nature are identified with each other. Jesus was a normal man who had an unusual grasp of the infinite. This 'Christ-realisation' is open to anyone. The Holy Spirit is a force within humanity.

### **Restorationism (American)**

See Campbellites.

### **Restorationism (British) aka New Churches**

The 'restoration' principle has been around for centuries. Many groups have espoused the desire to see a return to the purity of early church ministry and meetings – which is a good thing. However, most of these groups developed in erroneous ways and the term became just a title to foist some leader's ideas upon others, usually by emphasising spiritual gifts.

In the UK the term refers to the groups which gathered the disparate house churches that sovereignly emerged in the 1970s into hard denominations; hence it used to be called (erroneously) the House Church Mvt. Some now call these works 'New Church'. In the 70s and early 80s the Restorationist churches were closely allied with the Shepherding Mvt. which was prominent in the USA, and which led to accusations of 'heavy-shepherding' in

the UK. Though denied, this accusation was deserved as these groups often directed individuals and families far above the Biblical precedents for leaders, sometimes with terrible effects.

For ten years the ministry of the Fort Lauderdale Five or 'Christian Growth Ministries' (Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, Don Basham, Derek Prince, Ern Baxter) had enormous influence emphasising, submission, discipleship and shepherding (authoritarianism). All had either a strong Pentecostal background or close connections through the Charismatic Movement. Prince and Basham also emphasised demonic deliverance. Terms like 'covering' and 'who is your shepherd' were commonplace. A very restrictive, authoritarian and even abusive set of principles were foisted on the Restoration churches. Even Pentecostal leaders like Kathryn Kuhlman and Demos Shakarian condemned them. A number of scandals erupted in the US, which was kept from most loyal UK folk. Prince left in 1984 and the group fizzled out in the late 80s.

In the early 80s there were a number of Restorationist groups, usually a large church that had influence over a few others. The most prominent then was the Harvestime group based in Bradford under Bryn Jones; the name referring to their publishing house which produced the magazine, '*Restoration*'. The mission statement of this was a wrong interpretation of Acts 3:21, clearly a reference to the Second Coming, to mean a restored church filled with spiritual gifts and offices functioning in the end times. Terry Virgo's 'Coastlands' (later NFI)<sup>50</sup> was originally linked to Jones while others had more tenuous links (e.g. Tony Morton in Southampton). There was little fellowship with other groups.

By the late 80s Jones' work was in decline while Virgo's was growing; two streams (denominations) developed: NFI and Pioneer People under Gerald Coates. Differences between these include: Virgo was (originally) more Calvinistic, Baptist roots, amillennial, evangelistic; Coates' being more: Arminian (later Socinian), Brethren roots, postmillennial, radical. Soon other smaller new groups arose, such as Arminian Roger Forster's 'Icthus' in London. Various relationships now weave in and out amongst them all, unified by Wimber, Toronto, Kansas City Prophets, Alpha and so on, while many other groups have emerged, some very extreme Latter Rain inspired (e.g. Christian Outreach Church).

The key link was the adoption of NT leadership titles, but with unbiblical definitions, so that the principle of authoritarianism governed the churches until that they became cults. Virgo and Coates were apostles, others were prophets. However, 'apostle' here meant 'a leader with controlling authority over many churches' – something not seen in scripture, even with the apostles of the Lamb (the 12) let alone other apostles to the churches. In fact, this definition of 'apostle' is the same as the Anglican 'Archbishop' – what Restoration churches originally opposed. Apostolic teams then developed church strategy, which was then imposed on local churches (often greatly resisted or undesired). Two opposing forces were thus driving churches – the centralised strategy of the apostle (often to 'authenticate the apostolic ministry' – shame on them!) opposed to the natural leading of the local people for localised congregational life, fellowship and community.

Apostles and other leaders became more and more divorced from the people as they mingled in an unreal atmosphere of international communion with other apostles and prophets, or in national fraternals and conferences. A real clergy/laity split had occurred – the very thing these churches were originally founded to replace. Relationships with foreign leaders also led to many strategic and ministerial intrusions. Growth strategies that had worked in America were foisted without discussion or wisdom upon local UK churches (they all failed). Meeting aberrations that were prominent (say, in Korea) were adopted to

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<sup>50</sup> New Frontiers International (now New Frontiers).

gee up congregations (such as corporate shouted prayer).<sup>51</sup> All these intrusions gradually disappeared in time having had no lasting value, but some did much damage.

What very few people understood at the time was that all these Restorationist principles were drawn from Latter Rain heresies, long outlawed. Some early influences were actually Latter Rain men; Ern Baxter, for instance, used to be William Branham's secretary. Over time, more and more Latter Rain ideas began to emerge, especially when kick-started by the involvement with Wimber.

Key problems:

- Pyramid authority structure or top-down authoritarianism. While frequently denied, the evidence is clear everywhere. God speaks to the apostle (sometimes via a prophet), he discusses it with the apostolic team, strategy is imposed on local leaders, who impart it to elders (an unbiblical split, all elders are equal), who then tell the church. No one in the church has any input, in complete contradiction of Acts 15 and opposite to the spirit of Paul, who acted as a father or a nursing mother to his churches (which he did not dominate).
- Importation of errors. While the CM generally has been a Trojan Horse for occult errors, the Restoration churches have done more to damage doctrine and church principles than any other movement. The network of global contacts through apostolic ministries laid a pipeline for foreign heresies to flow very quickly.
- Toronto. It was the Restoration churches that fell for this lie first and helped to convince the churches that it was 'God' moving. This was founded upon its earlier support for the Kansas City Prophets and other foreign errors.
- Ecumenism. These groups fostered a conciliatory approach to Romanism (and some other errorists). This was based upon the idea of a unifying tie in the Charismatic experience. Some groups have actively worked towards this, such as Virgo, initiating shared platforms. This ecumenism was an early planned strategy by the Fort Lauderdale Five who believed Catholics made quicker progress in Charismania.
- Destruction of Biblical principles: there are too many to describe fully here, but they include: - modelling a false worship system based upon emotionalism, subjectivity and entertainment. Modelling an unbiblical authoritarian leadership structure. Utterly false understanding of what church is and how it meets, with the resultant damage to fellowship that can last years. Tendency to drag people away from family relationships that are not part of the group.
- Teaching unbiblical doctrines.
- Damage to the flock. There are very many specific cases of psychological, financial, spiritual and physical abuse documented. The problems caused to individuals that have flowed from this system are innumerable. Many ministries have been established to help them.

Many of these things constitute a cult. Of particular importance in this regard is the necessary submission to apostolic and leadership authority; putting the group before all else; inculcating separation from non-involved family members; demanding and controlling member's tithes without discussion of how it is spent; downplaying of Biblical authority and fostering an elitist influence.

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<sup>51</sup> This was an aberration found in South Korea (at Yonggi Cho's church) and is connected to the Chinese Shouters (see later).

## Rhema churches and ministries

These are radical Charismatic churches that usually involve authoritarian ministries like apostles and prophets. They centre their attention on a claimed separation of two Greek words in the NT, often both translated as 'word'. These are '*logos*' and '*rhema*'.

The claim is that *logos* refers to the universal word of God as revealed in the Bible; a general saying that is applicable to everyone indiscriminately. *Rhema* is supposed to be an individual word; a particular application of revelation to the individual alone. This could be a revelation, a personal prophecy or some other subjective apprehension of God's revelation.

In other words, *logos* is objective and indiscriminate while *rhema* is subjective and personal.

One has to wonder why such attention is put on this speculative differentiation and denominations built upon it. The Charismatic Movement already has a focus on individual, personal revelations and always has done without this grammatical splitting of hairs.

The doctrine thus affirms that there are two types of revelation. The first is the *logos* which is the Biblical record of God's word which is considered lifeless and formal by such Charismatics; the second is the *rhema* word, which is a personal revelation by the Holy Spirit; a '*now word*'. Radical Charismatics give much more authority to a '*now word*' than the Bible. This doctrine helps to undergird this subjectivity.

Previous theologians that developed a focus upon a personal, subjective revelation as the basis of inspiration (usually based on a Bible verse being highlighted) include Karl Barth. Watchman Nee also implied something similar in his book '*Spiritual Authority*'. Charismatics have taken this one step further into mysticism.

However, the Bible does not support this teaching in any way whatsoever. The idea of a '*now word*' or a '*rhema word*' is never taught by the apostles. You will find no *rhema* doctrine in the NT. More importantly, the Greek text offers no support for such a formal separation of the two words. In fact, the NT texts often use the words interchangeably. In Acts 10:44 we see, 'While Peter was still speaking these words [*rhema*], the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word [*logos*]'. *Rhema* and *logos* clearly refer to the same thing.

*Logos* is the main word used for 'word' in the NT and *rhema* is used far less often. *Logos* means: a word, a word uttered by a living voice and embodies a conception or idea; what someone has said; the sayings of God; decree, mandate or order; what is declared' a thought, declaration, aphorism, a weighty saying, a dictum, a maxim, discourse, the act of speaking, speech; doctrine, teaching, anything reported in speech; a narration, narrative; a suit at law; reason, the mental faculty of thinking, meditating, reasoning, calculating. In John it denotes the essential Word of God, Jesus Christ, the personal wisdom and power in union with God.

*Rhema* (pronounced hray'-mah) means something uttered by a living voice, a spoken word, a speech, discourse or utterance; a saying or narrative. It can even mean a case at law. It is used for the preaching of the Gospel (Rm 10:8; 1 Pt 1:25) – nothing like a subjective personal revelation. In 2 Cor 13:1 it refers to doctrine. It is also used for the sacred text (Eph 6:17; Heb 6:5).

In terms of a saying, a word, an utterance, a speech, the Gospel proclaimed, or even a law suit, both words can be used interchangeably.

The problem for Charismatics focused on the authority of prophets and prophecy is that there is no proof of authority, unlike God's written word. All historic prophetic movements have fallen into disrepute and scandal because they were words of despotic men and mystics. No supposed prophet (there are none in the OT sense under the New Covenant) can authenticate that his words are divinely inspired. In fact, time after time, the words of supposed prophets have been found by experience to be: imagination, mysticism, self-imposed authority, wishful thinking, meaningless meandering and sometimes the words were inspired by Satan and demons. Many Charismatic and Pentecostal formal prophets were later exposed as alcoholics, thieves, homosexuals, abusers and fornicators.

The *rhema* doctrine is simply a means to try to provide a coating of authority for mystical uttering claimed to be divine. It is nonsense.

### **Roman Catholicism**

We can only summarise this topic, which requires a large book to fully analyse it.

Medieval Catholicism was easier to quantify since its character was unchanging; however developments since then, and especially in the last 150 years, have changed this considerably. However there are two chief streams, Traditional Catholicism and New Catholicism.

#### *Traditional Catholicism*

The authorities for this are the Council of Trent, the Creed of Pope Pius IV, the decrees of Vatican I and II, papal utterances claiming infallibility and Roman canon law.

The centre of this is the doctrine of the church, which developed in the Middle Ages on the lines of an imperial court; thus a hierarchical structure and the pope as an absolute monarch. The height of this was in 1302 when Pope Boniface VIII declared that '*outside the church there is no salvation*' (*Unam Sanctam*); i.e. salvation required submission to the Pope. This was added to in 1870 with the doctrine of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council.

Rome teaches that the church on earth is the extension of the Incarnation, the church is Christ continuing; the body of Christ is the Roman Church in which Christ speaks. Vatican II confirmed this, adding that the church, therefore, cannot be wrong (Vatican II, 2:12). The church is equal to the Bible. Thus Christ still speaks infallibly and still offers himself up as a sacrifice in the Mass. The church is thus prophet (infallible revelation), priest (the Mass) and king (papal authority) like Christ.

The seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, Mass, holy orders, penance, matrimony, extreme unction) are channels of grace ministered by the church. The church thus formally issues divine power through priests. Done correctly, the sacraments work '*ex opere operato*' (by virtue of the performance of the work).

In baptism original sin is cleansed and restored by the infusion of grace. The Fall did not lead to Total Depravity but to the loss of the gift of original righteousness; man still has essential integrity. The infusion of grace is deepened in confirmation and sustained by the Mass and penance (confession).

The Mass is the focal point of this church. Behind this is the doctrine of transubstantiation, put forth by the 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council in 1215 and reaffirmed in Vatican II. This claims that after the words of consecration the substance of the bread and wine are actually

transformed into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ. The priest is actually another Christ<sup>52</sup> sacrificing Christ as a propitiation in the elements; it is all pagan nonsense.

### *New Catholicism*

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a modernist liberal movement developed in the church. Pius X condemned this movement and put sanctions on it but it continued. However, Pope John XXIII opened the door to the progressives, which allowed them a forum in Vatican II and affirmed a distinction between the traditional faith and the way it is presented. Despite popes trying to turn the tide, the respected Hans Kung, for example, could rip apart the idea of papal infallibility. Transubstantiation began to be replaced by trans-signification; clerical celibacy is under debate and cherished positions are under fire.

In reality a number of viewpoints are now evident in this movement. This can be summarised as: 1) a desire to be more Biblical (in a liberal way); 2) ecumenism; 3) stay in Rome but reform it. Protestants are seen less as heretics and more as brethren and progressives even seek inclusion of all religions in synthesis with Catholicism. Thus there is a tendency towards universalism.

Progressives insist that they believe the original dogmatic statements but interpret them in a new way.

### *Catholic Pentecostalism*

This began in 1966 in Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. The early leaders were mostly laymen. The movement grew rapidly as they tried to avoid Pentecostalism's excesses and stay loyal to the church. Some Charismatic groups sought an ecumenical union with Catholicism (such as the Fort Lauderdale Five) but they kept this secret.

As well as evangelical aspects (personal faith in Christ, Bible reading, prayer, and evangelism) these New Catholics enhanced traditional sacramentalism and affirmed a deeper appreciation of the Mass, and the confessional. It also strongly supported the Mary cult and use of the Rosary. Some tongues-speaking sessions were interpreted as 'Hail Mary'. In some cases the Pentecostal experience has been linked with Zen, Transcendental Meditation and Marxism, synthesised with Catholicism.

In reality the key foundation of all this is the baptism in the Spirit experience, not dogma or practice. It is a movement based upon a mystical experience.

There are multiple heresies and practical aberrations in dogmatic Catholicism.

### *Authority*

- Scripture plus tradition.
- Infallibility of the Pope.
- Declarations of priests, e.g to forgive sin.

### *God*

- Elevation of Mary to a redeeming goddess. This began with the Constantinian settlement which brought pagan ideas into the church, i.e. the mother goddess concept. This goddess had titles such as 'star of the sea' or 'our lady' and the mother and child motif of the Horus and Isis Egyptian cult; though the roots go back to Babylon.

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<sup>52</sup> Pius XI encyclical '*Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*'.



- In 1854 Mary was declared to have had an Immaculate Conception (*Infallibilis Deus* bull). That is, Mary was conceived without sin. This was the triumph of the Franciscan theory of Duns Scotus – Mary was preserved from original sin.
- In 1950 Pope Pius XII declared the bodily assumption of Mary to heaven.
- Vatican II pronounced Mary as the Mother of the Church and virtually approved of Marian devotions. Catholics had long prayed to Mary.
- Mary supremely illustrates the Catholic fundamental of meritorious works; human merit and human co-operation in salvation.

### *Man in sin*

- Denial of original sin; man is not totally depraved after the Fall.
- Sins are classified as mortal (which deprive the soul of sanctifying grace) or venial. Venial sins are dealt with by attrition (sorrow for sin for a lesser motive, such as fear of punishment). Moral sins by contrition (true repentance) plus confession. Guilt requires not only priestly absolution but also penance to pay God.

### *Salvation*

- Sacrificing Jesus every mass.
- Salvation by works.
- Salvation is only through the administration of grace through the church.
- Grace is not sovereign and free but an infusion to aid works via the sacraments.
- Priests have the power to forgive sin and to offer sacrifice.
- Indulgences: Great saints produced additional merit in their holy lives, which is banked in heaven as capital. This can be set to the sinner's account at his own request or by a relative after his death while he is in purgatory. Payments for indulgences (i.e. buy your way to heaven), to produce finance to build papal architecture in Italy, was what prompted the Reformation.
- Extreme unction (last rites) enables forgiveness of sins if a priest manages to say the rite and anoint in time.

### *Eschatology*

- Purgatory (an invention).

### *Church*

- The church as a formal continuation of the incarnation. Jesus speaks through and is active within the church continually through its officers.
- Setting a man (pope) in the place of Christ as mediator and head of the church.
- The Mass as a continuing sacrifice.
- Seven sacraments.

### *Papal iniquity*

The wickedness of many popes is justly famous, though many today are ignorant of this problem because few read history. I will simply list a few gross sins.

- Fornication and adultery (Pope John XIII). Pope Sixtus IV licensed brothels at Rome.
- Violence (Pope Vagilius).
- Warfare (Pope Leo X).
- Occultism.
- Incest (Popes John II, Alexander VI).

- Paedophilia.
- Sacrificing to idols (Pope Marcellinus).

One pope (Joan) John VIII was actually a woman who was dismembered on having a miscarriage while on official duty.<sup>53</sup>

Though this is an extremely heretical sect, sadly there are some Christians within it.

### **Salvation Army**

This was initially an evangelistic mission founded in London in 1865 by former Methodist William Booth [1829–1912], initially as the Christian Revival Association. The work centred on preaching to the poor in the slums of East London. Booth, assisted by his gifted wife Catherine, preached in the streets, and made singing, uniforms, and bands a part of his evangelistic mission. In 1878 his mission took on the name Salvation Army, run on military lines, and with a fundamentalist approach to religion.

Booth's organisational gifts led to rapid expansion and inspired similar missions in other parts of the world. By 1879 Booth was leading 81 'stations' led by 127 full-time evangelists with another 1,000 volunteer workers. The first brass band appeared in 1878 with Salvationist words being added to popular songs. Salvationist uniforms were added in 1880.

The Army placed emphasis on welfare work and devoted much time to helping the destitute. It expanded rapidly not only in Britain but also overseas. In the USA Ballington Booth, a son of the founder, set up (1896) a splinter group, the Volunteers of America. The Salvation Army offers a successful missing person's bureau. Booth's son Bramwell exposed the white slave traffic of poor girls, leading to the establishment of Salvationist care and protection homes. Booth also exposed the situation of the poor and homeless in London in a famous book, *'In Darkest England – and the Way Out'*. Food banks, soup kitchens, night shelters and unemployment exchanges were established.

The ardent, military, aggressive style of evangelism often led to very serious opposition and sometimes riots occurred. One serious case of unrest happened in the town where I write these words (Worthing). The Salvationists charitable activities during WWI ameliorated the opposition.

Today the movement has about 2 million members worldwide.

### *Doctrines*

- Aggressive teetotalism (hence initial opposition).
- Revivalism.
- Arminianism.
- Pragmatism.
- Denial of celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- Denial of water baptism.
- Holiness Movement approach to sanctification (second blessing).

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<sup>53</sup> Platina: 'she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran to the temple'.

## **Seeker-sensitive churches**

Though we are looking primarily at practices here, the theological basis of 'seeker-sensitive' meetings underlies a great many other problems in the church today. These include: pragmatism superseding Biblical truth, the focus upon sinners' needs not God, concentration upon the congregation's felt needs; the place of media, drama, music, humour and entertainment in worship services. These are the 'theology' of humanism.

'Seeker sensitive' or 'user-friendly' practices arose out of the Church Growth Movement which was initiated by Donald McGavran at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, practically developed by John Wimber in 1975, and made popular by the books of his colleague at Fuller, C Peter Wagner. Among its emphases, it held that people engaged in mission do not require a common theological basis, all you need is to believe in Christ (God's truth is dropped). Another was the widespread use of the social sciences like: psychology, anthropology and sociology (humanistic truth is accepted). These led to a focus upon adopting methods to suit the world.

Arising out of this was the development of worship services, which were entirely aimed at visiting sinners in the congregation. The most famous church which succeeded in this was Bill Hybel's Willow Creek Church in Chicago. A UK Anglican example would be the Sheffield St Thomas Crookes adjunct church under Chris Brain; which was heavily influenced by Wimber and the Kansas City Prophets and later by Matthew Fox's *Planetary Mass*. His *The Nine O' Clock Service* used acid house dance music, light shows, strobes, lasers, half naked dancers, and so on. It ended in tears with Brain being accused of multiple cases of sexual misconduct and abuse in 1995.

Essentially this is the accommodation of the church to the superficial tastes of the world in order to attract visitors. This compromise of church principles uses fast-paced services which have modern music and bands, drama, film clips, pyrotechnics, light shows, humour and virtually no Biblical teaching. Anything which mentions sin and man's responsibility is removed in order not to frighten people away. Meetings must react to sinner's 'felt need', and are thus sensitive to seekers. Style is championed over substance.

Other factors include marketing: seek public opinion to find out what people want to hear. Tailor short sermons to local needs not the Bible, e.g. marriage, parenting, finances, work, and relationships. Some churches provide crèches, fitness centres and restaurants to enable folk to drop off children, work out, eat and then catch a fast Christian service, just like going to a movie theatre.

Proponents include: Bill Hybels (Willow Creek Church), George Barna, Rick Warren (*The Purpose Driven Church*), Robert Schuller, Christianity Today Magazine.

### *Errors*

- Humanistic pragmatism.
- Denial of Biblical truth.
- Centring upon sinners.
- Inclusion of media, drama, music, humour and entertainment in worship services.
- Watering down the Gospel.

## **Seventh Day Adventism**

Organised in 1860 following the teachings of William Miller (hence 'Millerites') who claimed that Christ would return to Earth in 1843, then 1844, then claimed that Christ did

return but came to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary (hence 'Adventism'); these all resulted from visions.

While many in this movement would claim to worship Jesus, the reality is that the cult gives every appearance of reverencing Ellen G White, their 'prophetess' who rescued the movement with her teachings and writings (many plagiarised) after its initial downfall. One part of her teaching was the need to honour the seventh-day Sabbath, which also resulted from a vision. The movement thus rests on two false visions.

SDA teaches many errors, such as: 'soul sleep' (saints are unconscious between death and the resurrection); annihilation of the wicked instead of everlasting punishment; a false view of the atonement denying the efficacy of the cross;<sup>54</sup> Satan as the scapegoat for sins; sinners contribute in dealing with sin through their efforts in probation (synergism); it denies assurance; and denial of the Lord's Day, which is called 'the mark of the beast'.

The work of Christ in redemption is denied in the Biblical sense and the testimony of God's word is thoroughly contradicted by the visions and teaching of a woman.

### **The Shouters**

This began as a Chinese sect (Huhan Pai). The Shouters were so called as members engaged in public shouting as part of their worship.

Some state that it emerged from Watchman Nee's central China Little Flock while others say it began in Henan province in the 1960s, having been an import from South Korea. The South Korean sect is led by Li Changshou, who has a semi-divine status amongst the Shouters.

Before the Communists came to power in 1949, Watchman Nee's Little Flock had grown to 300,000. His emphasis on decentralised congregations launched a home-church movement that helped Christianity survive Communist repression. However many congregations were isolated and gradually splintered into separate groups. The Chinese sect of the Shouters was one such group. It began as a sect of Witness Lee, a disciple of Watchman Nee who launched his sect in Los Angeles after being active in China and Taiwan. He publishes his errors in his journal '*The Stream*'. Lee's church is titled 'The Church in Los Angeles'. Many disgruntled Brethren and 'Jesus People' converts joined Lee because of his connection to Watchman Nee.

### *Errors*

- The Shouters rewrote the Lord's Prayer to read simply, '*Oh, Lord Jesus*'; followers shout the phrase while stamping their feet in unison. This is shouted repetitively and exuberantly.
- To be saved one must shout '*Oh, Lord Jesus*'. This supposedly involves being mingled with God. Lee appeals to Old and New Testament references to support this practice.
- Christian victory is not gained by doctrine or prayer but by four words of praise. The assemblies often repeat in unison, either spoken, sung, or shouted: '*O Lord, Amen, Hallelujah!*'.
- Authoritarianism: Witness Lee is the supreme autocrat.
- Elitism: Lee avers that God is present only in his local assemblies. All others are outside the will and blessing of God.

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<sup>54</sup> *We dissent from the view that the atonement was made upon the cross*, Ellen G White, 'The Great Controversy', p489.

- Brainwashing: Lee's teaching and control is a form of brainwashing. All who join his assemblies are admonished to forget all the doctrine they ever knew, and submit to the ways and teachings of Lee.

Selection of quotes from Lee taken from *The Stream*:

Do not pay attention to the forms, the regulations, the teachings, the doctrines ... No, we must pay our full attention to life.

There is no need for you to try to be victorious. Just say from deep within, "O Lord, Amen, Hallelujah! O Lord, Amen, Hallelujah! O Lord, Amen, Hallelujah!" and you will be so victorious. If you would go to the Lord and praise Him in this way (above) for five or ten minutes, you will be over all, and strengthened in your spirit. Why? It is because you contact the living Lord! It is not a religion, a Christianity, a lot of doctrines, or a set of teachings, forms or regulations. No! ... . We all must have our "heads cut off."

We do not need the Bible study classes. ... We must listen to the present, instant speaking of the living Spirit.

In the 1980s, after a trip to South Korea, Terry Virgo brought back the practice of uncontrolled, shouted, corporate prayer to his British congregations, this then spread to other churches under his banner. This was nothing but the Korean form of The Shouters' aberrant behaviour imported to the UK.

### **Signs and Wonders Movement (S&W)**

While Restorationism was dangerous, it was with the 'Third Wave'<sup>55</sup> that deep occult principles were adopted in mainstream UK evangelicalism. The churches that had resisted and condemned Pentecostalism, derided Latter Rain, avoided faith-healing, and balked at the Charismatic Movement, suddenly took on board occult principles through John Wimber (Vineyard Churches). Some of the roots of S&W are observed in the section on New Thought (q.v.).

#### *John Wimber brings all the precursors together (1980s +)*

Wimber was easy to like. He was humble, funny, had a theological professorship pedigree and was very winsome. He seemed cautious to adopt Classic Pentecostal theology (which won him friends) and did not place healing in the atonement. However, instead Wimber brought with him principles that were much worse. First, he brought Latter Rain nonsense after his meeting with Paul Cain and then promoted the 'New Breed' teaching plus a focus upon global revival and prophecy. When all the initial promise failed in the early 90s, Wimber became withdrawn; but the damage had been done.

But there was much more to worry about with Wimber, so much so that we can only scratch the surface here. His emotional or inner healing rested greatly on the occult principles of Agnes Sanford and others. His healing emphasis rested upon New Thought ideas, mixed with Roman Catholic doctrine, Morton Kelsey and Quaker mysticism. Wimber's wife believed the shaking experiences came from his Quaker heritage, but some techniques were straight out of Mesmerism. It was his demand for a 'paradigm shift' that was most damaging.

His 'Power Evangelism', or 'doing the stuff' was learned from an early colleague, a young hippie called Lonnie Frisbee, who was later exposed as a homosexual and a witch. In fact he ultimately apostatised and reverted to Wicca. Frisbee was able to get people to fall over through Mesmerism before he became a church evangelist and leader originally connected

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<sup>55</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> wave = Pentecostalism; 2<sup>nd</sup> wave = Charismatic Movement; 3<sup>rd</sup> wave = Signs & Wonders Mvt.

to Calvary Chapel. It was Frisbee that directly impacted Wimber to initiate the phenomena associated with the Signs and Wonders Movement. Calvary Chapel, and later Wimber, separated from Frisbee due to his obvious sins, but the damage was done.

Wimber simply presumed that the Eastern approach to spiritual things, being more child-like and expectant, was sound, when in fact it is an approach based on occultism rooted in false religions. When he demanded that materialistic Christian westerners become like Orientals, what he was really teaching was not being more faithful, but more occultic. Consequently, Wimber became open to a wide range of occult techniques, teaching and odd beliefs.

Through a series of close relationships with influential men like David Watson, Terry Virgo and John White, Wimber was accepted to many platforms previously withheld from Pentecostals. Doors were also opened for him into the papacy; in fact, he became a powerful tool for world ecumenism.

What Wimber did was to bring historic mystical techniques into evangelicalism, coupled with Latter Rain Pentecostalism, New Thought and Roman Catholic healing ideas. Folk who had never heard of these heresies began to buy books at Wimber conferences by Agnes Sanford, Morton Kelsey, Francis MacNutt and so on. This was a major source of corruption. Wimber also revolutionised Charismatic worship by introducing a very secular influence of folk-rock music, pop and rock idioms of song-writing, flowing musical interludes to sustain long periods of singing (a mystical technique) and a subjective emphasis. Though not the first to do these things, he was the most successful in promoting them.

Errors include:

- Denying the authority of the Bible; *'God is greater than his word'*.
- Accepting truth from extra-Biblical sources – such as demons, other religions, shamans.
- Called God and Christ a *'force'*. Dishonoured the Lord Jesus; he once called him a *'blasphemer'* and said he sometimes had *'no faith'*! [*Church Planting Seminar*, tapes 1,2,3,4,5, March 28, 1981]
- Had openly occult phenomena in his meetings; now exposed by co-workers.
- Endorsed heretics. Endorsed Hindu, pantheistic and Gnostic heresies.
- Accepted Catholic miracles, supported the Pope, loved Mary, believed in relics.
- Believed in ghosts, ancestor spirits, earthly gods, nymphs, dryads, planetary influences, natural (unchristian) healers, shamanism (witchcraft) etc.

For more information see my paper, 'Unholy Alliances'.

*Kansas City Prophets (1990 +)*

Wimber introduced these men to the UK in 1990, though he later separated when the damage was done. Some of these were the most severe heretical and unholy people ever to be allowed to minister. Several were later expelled from the ministry for fornication, homosexuality, alcoholism, sexual abuse and other crimes. One, Bob Jones, was clearly a demonised person from the start but was still allowed to minister since he could produce prophecy and phenomena. What the KCP did was to bring the fulness of Latter Rain into evangelicalism and pave the way for the Toronto excesses. All the key CM and Restoration leaders (inc. Terry Virgo, Gerald Coates, Roger Forster & Lynn Green) supported these men in writing and got them to lay hands on their people. They have never repented for this.

### *Toronto Aberration and Brownsville, Pensacola (1994 +)*

This was a major occult inroad to the UK churches that devastated people, dishonoured God to the world, and split churches. It was the natural outcome of Pentecostalism and occult roots that led to extreme phenomena hitting ordinary churchgoers. What was once limited to radical cults like the Shakers or Azusa Street became mainstream. The age-old occult excesses of screaming, crying, barking, roaring, falling, etc. hit unsuspecting believers. Amazingly, CM leaders still defend this. Leaders who became so delusional that they jumped on the spot for hours saying, *'I'm a piece of toast'* or crawled on all fours saying, *'I'm a bull for the Lord'*, are still allowed to minister. This is the level to which the church has slumped.

### *Alpha Course*

This is also accepted by everyone, despite its appalling Gospel.

It grew out of Toronto as a method of evangelism since CM witnessing had become completely ineffective. Since it attracts large numbers, it has now been introduced by most churches. Its message is poverty-stricken but its emphasis on friendship and communal meetings is attractive, especially to lonely people. It gives little, if any, prominence to God's sovereignty, sin, conviction, repentance, total depravity, divine calling, atonement, sovereign grace, Jesus' Lordship and so on (the heart of the Gospel) but emphasises man's need and what 'Christianity' can do to meet it. This is not the Gospel. The focus is on a weekend away where a Toronto-type message is hammered home and the goal is to get people to fall down, whereupon they are declared to be saved. The testimonies in Alpha publications demonstrate that very many people who pass through this course are not Biblically saved.

The Signs and Wonders Movement was the coalescence of all the previous attempts to bring a syncretism of the occult and mysticism with Christianity. It covers a wide variety of denominations and movements of varying extremes, such as Word Faith churches, the Apostolic Reformation Movement, UK Restoration, and even mainstream institutional churches, plus many smaller esoteric groups, too many to list.

### **Swedenborgianism / The New Church / Church of the New Jerusalem**

This sect was based on the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg [1688–1772] and officially founded in 1787 in East London by Swedenborg's followers. Swedenborg, the son of a Lutheran bishop, was a brilliant Swedish scientist, philosopher, and mystic who blended Christianity with pantheism and theosophy (an occult religion); yet he stayed a devout member of the established church.

In 1719 Swedenborg was made a noble by the queen and assumed the name 'Swedenborg'. His radical ideas began when he saw a vision of 'Christ' in 1744, which followed a series of strange dreams and visions. In this vision 'Christ' delivered him from guilt caused by his pride in his great intellectual accomplishments and confirmed his developing radical theology. In 1747 he resigned from his post as assessor of the Royal Board of Mines and abandoned his scientific pursuits to centre on theology. Multiple volumes of teaching flowed from his pen after that, many of them being descriptions of visions and communications from the spirit world.

The New Church grew falteringly, suffering multiple schisms, but gradually became firmly established after 20 years, especially in northwest England. Its earliest leaders came out of Methodism and its teaching style mirrored that. Its government was congregational with each church sending representatives to the annual general conference. It is declining in Britain with about 1,300 members and about 6,000 members in the US, 25,000 elsewhere, mostly in Africa.

There is a separate body, 'The General Church of the New Jerusalem', that sticks more literally to Swedenborg's teachings and has an episcopal government.

### *Doctrines*

- Originally explained creation in a mechanistic manner but later abandoned materialism for Neo-Platonic ideas fashionable amongst 17<sup>th</sup> century Protestant mystics.
- Essentially his system is a Neo-Platonic exposition of Christianity.
- The Second Coming of Christ occurred in 1757 in the heavens and his followers felt that this required forming a new church.
- God is one person with multiple aspects (modalism). Similar to ancient Sabellianism and Modal Monarchianism. The Trinity is love, wisdom and activity as attributes of one person, not three.
- Wrong view of Jesus, who was merely human when God took over him but glorified through conquering evil. Jesus' soul was actually God the Father but his body derived from Mary. The Holy Spirit is the action of the two in unison.
- Vicarious atonement is denied.
- God is present in the Bible. As well as the literal meaning there is a deeper spiritual meaning that was given to Swedenborg. Since the internal sense is not found in some parts, Swedenborg omits them from the canon (parts of the OT, Acts, NT letters).
- Interpretation of Scripture depends upon 'correspondence' between the material world and the spiritual world (occultism). Swedenborg's writings open up this correspondence.
- Man's eternal destination is determined by his free will choice to believe in Christ's work [showing the Wesleyan Arminian influence]. Justification by faith is denied. Good men go to heaven, selfish men go to hell.
- The institutional churches had destroyed the original Biblical theology and Swedenborg's mission was to restore it. This message in 1757 marked the transition to a new age (the Second Coming in heaven).

This is typical of many sects which promote the imaginings of some man who has some demonic, revelatory, mystical experience. Over and over again we see a man have a mystical vision, be overpowered by it, and then produce reams and reams of teachings that essentially join Christian teachings with mysticism and occultism; in this case mainly Neo-Platonism (which is Greek philosophy combined with eastern mysticism based on meditation on the transcendent one).

### **Unification church [Moonies]**

A false religious cult founded by Sun Myung Moon [1920–] in South Korea in 1954. There are about 3 million members.

Moon had evidenced clairvoyant capacities as a child and aged 16 he received a vision of 'Jesus' and was told to complete the task Jesus had failed to finish! Jesus had spiritually redeemed mankind but was crucified before he could go further; physical redemption was unfulfilled!

In 1944 Moon married the first of several wives and changed his name from Yong Myung Moon ('Shining dragon moon') to Sun Myung Moon ('Sun shining moon'). Originally he was in the Presbyterian church but was excommunicated in the 1950s. He then met with some Pentecostals who told him that Korea was the new promised land and that the future messiah would come from there. A year later he started the Unification Church. He was then imprisoned for bigamy and practising capitalism in Communist North Korea. After



three months he was released and moved to South Korea. In 1954 he founded the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity in Seoul. He then divorced his wife. In 1954 he was arrested for immorality and draft evasion but was released after three months.

In this period he began to write the chief text of the church. In 1957 he published his *Divine Principle*, although it was written by a follower and filled with visionary material. Business success and a stand against Communism gave him support in the west. In 1972 he announced that America was his next base for mission activity, buying a large estate in upstate New York. In 1982 he achieved great publicity by marrying over 2,000 couples in a single ceremony; they were matched by Moon a month before. In 1988 he officiated at the wedding of 6,500 couples.

In reality, like many US cults, Moon attracted teenagers at college who were lonely. After being love-bombed at a house, they are invited to a retreat where they are given great attention and brainwashed. Soon they become converts.

Moon was again on charges in the early 1980s, this time of tax evasion. He was convicted and served 13 months in 1984.

In recent years growth has slowed down after much bad publicity. Moon was even nearly deported on charges of fraud. Somehow Moon has continued to have influence on the conservative Right. In 1987 Moon boasted that he wished to subjugate the American government and population. The church has been criticised for its shady business practices and allegations of brainwashing recruits into absolute obedience (i.e. it is a cult).

Moon's theology, expressed in the *Divine Principle*, claims that a sinless man (considered to be Moon) will save the world and institute the kingdom of God. Worse hubris is hard to find.

### *Authority*

- The Bible is not the truth itself but a textbook teaching truth. Its purpose is to bring us to Christ.
- In these days God speaks anew to accomplish what Christ left undone.

### *Misc. heresies*

- Goal – the unification of all people under God. This begins with ecumenism of all churches.
- Three ages to history: OT, NT and the 'Complete Age' where humanity becomes fully redeemed.
- Central doctrine: dualism – the separation of spiritual and physical.

### *God*

- Denies the Trinity. God is one, containing positivity and negativity or masculinity and femininity.
- God is self-generating energy, the first cause.
- God is known in nature and in Jesus.

### *Jesus*

- Jesus failed his mission because he never married to supplant the imperfect marriage of Adam and Eve. A Third Adam is required to do this. Many members declare that

Moon is this person. Moon's fourth wife is called 'the Perfect Mother'. Jesus failed to build the kingdom of God on the earth.

- Jesus' body remained in the grave but he was resurrected in the spirit (a type of Gnosticism). Thus he made possible spiritual salvation. Physical redemption awaits.
- Divergence between what Jesus taught and what Paul taught. Paul taught the Person of Jesus but Jesus preached the kingdom. Thus Paul transformed Jesus' shameful death into a glorious one. [Similar to Jehovah's Witnesses.]

### *Holy Spirit*

- Is feminine. God is Father, the Spirit is Mother; the Second Eve.
- Thus the Spirit is not a distinctive Person, but energy from God.

### *Man*

- Man is an incarnate god.

### *Sin*

- Man was born of Adam and Eve's lustful fornication. This is the cause of sin.

### *The devil*

- As a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, Lucifer took over the control of the world from God. He is in control. God is struggling to regain control of the earth.

### *Hell*

- Hell exists on Earth. It will eventually be transformed into God's kingdom.

### *Salvation*

- Salvation is spiritual and physical. Jesus accomplished the spiritual redemption but the cross stopped him gaining the physical one.
- A Third Adam is needed to complete redemption.

### *Eschatology*

- The Second Coming will occur when a perfect man and woman become the true spiritual parents of humanity. Those who follow them will be heirs of God's kingdom.

### *Summary*

The Unification Church is an extreme cult and a very dangerous one. It teaches utter nonsense which is justified by denying the sole authority of the Bible for doctrine and elevating the words of Moon to divine status – thus any new, imaginary teaching he comes up with is justified.

Worse still is the blasphemy of Jesus which will be recompensed with divine judgment on all who hold such teachings without repentance.

### **Unitarians, Unitarian Church**

Unitarians are a heretical sect of the Christian church espousing beliefs that are fully characteristic of liberal theology and humanism. In fact their doctrines adapt and change all the time according to the whims of culture. They reject formal dogma in favour of a rationalist and inclusivist approach to faith.

### *Doctrines*

- The Bible is merely a collection of myths and philosophy. The authority and inspiration of the Bible is fully denied.
- They assert the unity of God and reject the doctrine of the Trinity. God is not a personal being but rather the living processes of nature and the conscience in man.
- Jesus was merely a normal human being like any other man.
- Man is essentially good but imperfect, and can save himself by improvement of character.
- This leads to universalism in salvation (everyone saved; there is no hell and no heaven). In fact the idea of heaven and hell is repulsive to them.

Since they reject all Biblical doctrine, they have no right to call themselves Christian at all.

Originally there was a separate movement of *Universalists* but these joined with the Unitarians due to similar beliefs. It was said by Dr Greeley, after this merger, (sic) '*The Universalists thought that God was too good to damn man while the Unitarians thought that man was too good to be damned.*'

### **Unity School**

This was founded in the US in 1889 by Charles Fillmore and his wife Myrtle, previous converts to Christian Science. It emerged out of Christian Science ideas and was heavily influenced by New Thought. To this they added an interest in spiritualism, the occult and Hinduism. Unity later was more influenced by New Thought and the ideas of PP Quimby.

God is 'principle, law, mind' and spirit'. God, as a principle, is not separate from self; it is an emanation of the soul. This is a Hindu concept.

The Son is the second member of the Trinity and is 'Principle' revealed in the creative plan. Jesus is the name of a particular person, an ordinary man; Christ is the spiritual aspect of him. The Holy Spirit is the executive power of the Father and the Son. He is also the desire within men prompting the mind towards holiness and unity with God.

### *Errors*

- Denies the personality of God, he is a 'principle'.
- Wrong view of Jesus. Jesus is a mere man. Christ is a spiritual force.
- The Spirit is a power from the Father.
- Mixture of Christianity with Hinduism and occultism (syncretism).
- Sickness is an illusion.

### **The Way International**

The founder of this movement was American Victor Paul Wierwille [1916-1985] who was raised in a Reformed church and attended Princeton Theological seminary. As he began to doubt orthodox Christianity in his first pastorate in Ohio, he stated that God spoke to him directly (oh how often this occurs) with claims of revelation unknown to anyone since the first century. Thus he taught that all other denominations were false and only his church was true. This is true cultism. After a controversial mission trip to India where he did much damage, he was asked to resign from the Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1957.

He started the Way International in 1958 (the name being adapted from Acts 9:2). The Jesus Revival in the later 60s and 70s swelled his membership. He began teaching a 'Power for Abundant Living' course, which became a powerful evangelistic programme in the late

1960s, a film of which added to his numbers. He set up Bible schools and a publishing arm called American Christian Press. The people that attended his course had to pay significant sums of money.

The Way is a Mind-Control cult, like many others. It combines Fundamentalist notions with sophisticated training techniques (like the Forum) plus radical politics. Training includes stopping people thinking for themselves. Disagreement was a sign of the Devil, thus people lived in fear.

A hierarchical structure was established based on Wierwille and there are about 100,000 members worldwide. It has a bimonthly magazine, "The Way magazine" and a record company ("Word over the world"). There is an annual convention called "Rock of Ages".

### *Errors*

- Denial of the Trinity. God is one.
- Jesus is not God, but he is God's son and was born sinless by an act of God. This is worse than Arianism. [Arianism denied Jesus co-eternality with God the Father but allowed that he existed before his human birth.]
- Jesus was not born of a virgin but was born naturally of Mary and Joseph; yet because God gave Joseph special sperm he was born sinless. [This is also worse than Arianism, which accepts the virgin birth.]
- The Holy Spirit is not God but an impersonal force. The Father is the Holy Spirit (with capitals) but the holy spirit (without caps) is a force of God giving grace. God does not dwell in the believer but this force does.
- Fallen man has no spirit but is like an animal. Christians are given the spirit again.
- Believers continue to sin in body and soul but not in the spirit.
- Salvation is regaining the lost spirit and this is accompanied by oral confession. Converts speak in tongues.
- At death the believer remains in the grave until the final resurrection.
- Elitism.
- The NT was written in Aramaic.
- Christ was raised on the Sabbath, not Sunday.
- Water baptism is replaced by the baptism in the Spirit.

### **Westboro Baptist Church**

An infamous cultic Baptist church in Topeka, Kansas. It has been led by Fred Phelps [b. 1929] since 1955, who claims to be a Historic Calvinist but whose testimony is a shocking denial of grace.

### *Errors*

- Elitism: no one else is speaking the truth about the Bible and only its own members constitute true Christianity. Phelps is treated as the only teacher who is speaking the truth at this time. Phelps' word is treated as canonical.
- Phelps does not preach and expound scripture but reads pre-written speeches that are really personal rants.
- Authoritarianism and pride: Phelps is given undue status and honour within the church, only appearing in church services halfway through, to great hush and anticipation. Phelps associates an attack against him with the sin against the Holy Spirit. This pride devolves to members who act in a self-satisfied, elitist manner.

- Weird stuff: Phelps claims that an awful bomb attack on their church (based in a home with many kids present) resulted in the Iraq War as God's judgment.
- It is cultic: Members (virtually all from one extended family) are discouraged from having any outside contacts of any sort. Even a coffee with a school-friend is off-limits for the many college girls.
- This ministry is schismatic. Phelps' church seems to be founded upon a doctrine of schism. It looks for reasons to separate from other Christians. It rejoices in its alienation and isolation. It believes that it gains honour by acting vindictively against other people who may be brothers.
- This ministry is unbalanced. Phelps almost totally concentrates upon homosexuality. Why would anyone want to concentrate upon anything other than Christ, the focus of our worship and love; the one we are even commanded to follow and look to? Phelps teaches unbiblical concepts, e.g.: *'sodomites -- by definition -- are incapable of repenting'*.
- It is awash with defamatory statements. To be known internationally as 'the God hates fags preacher' is nothing to be proud of; yet Phelps seem pleased with this nomination. His overstatement of this is beyond belief, even for America. Obnoxious terms are used in language and writing that are inappropriate, especially for infants. Is it really godly for seven-year olds to be calling other people 'dykes', 'fags', 'queers' and to talk about 'talking it up the tail-pipe'? Worse still, placards in their hundreds are made using awful slogans to be waved in pickets.
- This ministry does not preach the Gospel. The gospel is not, 'God hates fags', 'God hates America', or 'God hates you'; but rather 'God commands your repentance' (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30), 'flee to Christ and receive eternal life' (Jn 3:15, 6:68, 10:28), 'there is forgiveness for sins in the blood of Jesus Christ' (Eph 2:13; Heb 9:14; 1 Pt 1:18-19); 'believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved' (Jn 1:12; Acts 10:43).
- This ministry misunderstands God sovereignty, providence and judgment. Phelps has taught his flock that death is a curse from God as a temporal judgment. Thus their argument runs: America has condoned homosexuality and is thus unrighteous. [This is true, but there is far more than merely homosexual issues that God is angry with in the US.] As a result, God tempted the US to wage war in Afghanistan and Iraq. [There is a measure of truth in this but it is far more complex.] Soldiers that go to fight in Iraq are thus unrighteous, ungodly and hell-deserving. [This is untrue. It is far more complex than this and there are genuine Christians in Iraq, in various military capacities, who are opposed to the war but, in good conscience, are part of it.] Any soldier who is killed in action is definitely in hell. [This is judgmental, cruel and wrong. No one can say who is in hell or not. Only God knows the human heart.] On the basis of this fallacious reasoning, the whole church pickets military funerals.
- There seems to be no understanding of Biblical suffering or that God's providence affects the wicked and the righteous. The Lord's true people suffer in hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes etc, just as much as the wicked. Indeed it must be so if God is to remain impartial and just. Believers do not get preferential treatment on the earth at this time. Their hope is in heaven, their kingdom is not of this world, their citizenship is spiritual. This means that there is a real lack of understanding God's sovereignty in our lives working all things to good, even bad things (Isa 45:7; Rm 8:1).
- This ministry is immoral. There are so many immoral and sinful things going on in the name of godliness that it makes my heart sick.
- Phelps does not understand the place of the church in the world. We are not called to protest, demonstrate and seek to change a hell-bent society. Our job is to preach the Gospel and edify our brethren, thus glorifying God. Instead, Phelps' church has conducted more than 22,000 picketing demonstrations across America and some foreign countries during the past 12 years. It is clear that the prime work of this church is picketing and demonstrating, something never commanded in scripture.

- It teaches children from a very young age to hate people for their lifestyle and opinions. Anyone who condones homosexuality or the Iraq War is said to be hated by God and is thus hated by the church family. Kids are brought up to be bigoted and hostile. Their lives are surrounded by hate. Young kids stated that they rejoiced when an American soldier died (or even when someone died of cancer or a road accident). This was a perverted sense of God's vindication, despite the fact that God himself states that he does not enjoy the death of the wicked (Ezek 18:23, 33:11). Taking kids, as young as seven, to carry foul signs<sup>56</sup> and picket the funeral of young men and women is wicked. Damaging the grieving families and friends of recently killed soldiers is extremely wicked; especially yelling that they are now in hell. Even if they were (no one has any way of knowing) the action is wrong because it does not proceed from love. Faith works through love, not through hate (Gal 5:6). We are to do good to all, not just the church (Gal 6:10). This behaviour is, therefore, sinful. The fact that the church sees it as a good work shows how deep a delusion they are in. Exposing young children to reprisals at these pickets is shameful and bad parenting. In one incident a seven-year-old kid was hit in the eye by a carton of liquid thrown from a passing car by angry youths. Peter tells us that it is sin to be persecuted for our own evil-doing (1 Pt 4:15).

### *Conclusion*

While Phelps may have a grasp of certain Biblical truths (such as the Doctrines of Grace), there is no doubt that his church is a cult manifesting many signs of unbiblical and even sinful behaviour. It is to be avoided.

### **Word of Faith**

This movement is very diverse, comprising certain Charismatic denominations, independent ministries, television networks, worship ministries and individual churches. Examples would include: Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Paul Yonggi Cho, Rick Joyner, Kenneth Hagin, Hillsong (Brian Houston; Australia), Elevation Music, Earl Paulk, Creflo Dollar, Randy Clark, Joyce Meyer, Robert Tilton, TD Jakes, Paula White, Fred Price, Bill Johnson's Bethel Church (California) etc.

It is a radical Charismatic movement that is the fastest growing Christian group in the world. Many representatives concentrate on: a prosperity Gospel, positive confession, healing for everybody, aberrant views on Christ and the atonement, occult manipulation in meetings, tolerance of exotic phenomena such as being slain in the Spirit etc., downplaying of sin and much more.

It tends to be authoritarian, based on the leadership of apostles, and is usually part of the New Apostolic Reformation, but not always. Several Word Faith churches are very independent having enough numbers and money to develop their own global ministries without needing alliances. Some like Copeland's have been around for decades while others, such as Bethel, are more recent. Some emerged out of Pentecostalism while others grew out of Charismaticism. The chief root is New Thought (q.v.). [See table in appendices.]

### *Errors*

- Typical doctrines and aberrations of Charismatic and Pentecostal churches.
- Overt occultism e.g. necromancy (grave-sucking), divination, Destiny Cards ('Christian' Tarot cards; Christalignment<sup>57</sup>), New Age ideas, New Thought ideas, channelling,

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<sup>56</sup> Such as: *God hates fags, God hates America, Fags eat pooh, Your pastor is a whore, Thank God for dead soldiers, Dead soldiers are in hell* or even a symbol of the action of sodomy using matchstick men.

<sup>57</sup> A ministry using 'prophetic artists and photographers' to make divination cards.

visualisation, various occult manifestations (falling backwards, unrelenting crying, screaming, shaking, jumping, writhing etc.) etc.

- Humanisation of God. Copeland and Jakes said that God looks like a man, is just over 6-foot tall and weighs around 200 pounds. Adam looked just like God.
- Deification of man. Spirit-filled Christians are little gods.
- Christ divested himself of divinity during the incarnation (Kenosis theory) and was a mere man.
- Corruption of the Trinity. Hinn said that the Godhead consists of nine people.
- Christ was overcome by Satan and was born again ('recreated') in hell.
- Christ took Satan's nature; redemption was gained in hell. Satan was paid by God in Christ's torment in hell to get back into the Earth from which he had been banished.
- Prophecy over Scripture.
- Focus on money and power. Tilton said that being poor is a sin.
- Positive confession. Name it and claim it prosperity.
- Automatic healing in the atonement. Sickness is due to a lack of faith. [Many Word Faith preachers of this have been sick (Oral Roberts), had heart attacks (Paul Crouch), cancer (Fred Price's wife) and so on.]
- Calling things into existence.

For details see entries on: Pentecostalism, Charismatic Movement, Signs and Wonders movement, New Thought, Latter Rain movement, PP Quimby, Rhema churches and the NAR.

### **Worldwide Church of God (Armstrongism)**

Founded by Herbert W Armstrong [1892-1986]. In 1927 he was converted to a new set of beliefs influenced by his wife who insisted that to be saved one must obey God's law, as in the Ten Commandments. Thus began this church.

In 1934 Armstrong began broadcasting from Eugene, Oregon. He also started his magazine, 'The Plain Truth'. Subscribers grew exponentially. In 1947 he founded Ambassador College in Pasadena. A second magazine started, 'The World Tomorrow'. In 1953 Armstrong began broadcasting in Europe via Radio Luxembourg. He was often pictured with heads of state.

The magazine and broadcasts centred on betterment of culture and standards as well as environmental improvement, which was very popular. Little is said about doctrine. The magazines were also offered free of charge.

After 1957 Armstrong's son, Garner Ted Armstrong, took over broadcasting duties. In 1960 a second Ambassador College was opened in Bricket Wood, England (closed 1976). In 1964 a third was opened in Texas.

Armstrong had prophesied that in 1972 the church would be raptured and transported to Petra – this failed. In fact Garner stopped broadcasting for four months and was said to be '*in the bonds of Satan*'. In fact he had been involved in a sex scandal. Over 5,000 people left the church. In 1978 Herbert expelled him. Garner responded by founding the Church of God International in Texas, which grew rapidly while more people left the WCG.

Charges were brought against Armstrong and financial advisor Stanley Rader by the State of California in 1979 for diverting church funds of millions. The WCG diminished while the

COGI expanded. In 1981 Rader was paid \$750,000 but two thirds went towards taxes, then he was removed from office.

Rader and Armstrong's wife, Ramona, conspired to have Herbert removed and declared mentally incompetent. Herbert set about divorcing Ramona. A former member and attorney accused Herbert of financial corruption and moral destitution by living with his daughter incestuously for ten years. However, in 1982 the WCG began to grow again through good marketing, the COGI began to diminish. In 1985 8.2 million copies of Plain Truth were distributed. Herbert continued to broadcast until he died in 1986.

After this time the new leader, Joseph W Tkatch, has tried to reform the church and bring it closer to Biblical doctrine.

### *Heresies of Armstrongism*

Herbert was very influenced by his wife who had been a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and also a splinter group, the Church of God (Seventh Day); thus the strange concepts of the WCG derived from the Adventists.

### *Authority*

- Armstrong alone was right and he alone was God's true prophet (cf. Joseph Smith and CT Russell). To follow God you had to follow Armstrong.

### *God*

- The Trinity was rejected on the grounds that the Holy Spirit was not the Third Person. He claimed that the doctrine of the Trinity was pagan.
- Instead of rejecting the Trinity to affirm that there is one god (as many do), this group refuses to limit god to any number (cf. Mormonism). God is re-creating himself, reproducing himself, in men.
- God and humanity are not clearly distinguished in Herbert W Armstrong's theology; through prayer and obedience, humans become god.

### *Jesus*

- Jesus had one nature and after his death he did not resume his human nature but was completely spiritual. Similar to ancient Monophysitism.

### *The Holy Spirit*

- The Holy Spirit is merely a divine force (c.f. Jehovah's Witnesses).

### *Man*

- Does not possess an immortal soul, but is a soul. The soul dies with the person.
- Regeneration only occurs at the resurrection.

### *Salvation*

- There is no salvation in this life; it occurs at the resurrection when God's children are resurrected.
- On earth the believer is impregnated by the Spirit called 'begetting'; the beginning of a process of salvation.
- Jesus died to remit sins but believing in him is not sufficient to start the process; one must obey God's commands. Thus all OT laws are bound on believers, including the Sabbath and festal days (what about the sacrifices?). Jesus showed that the laws could be kept.



### *Eschatology*

- True children of God will be resurrected but the wicked remain dead. The dead cease to exist (annihilationalism). There is no hell.
- God recreates himself through mankind.
- Armstrong falsely predicted Armageddon would occur in 1975 and that the WQCG would be raptured to Petra. Armstrong had falsely predicted this to occur in 1936, 1943, 1972 and 1975. [Why did people still follow him?]
- Armstrong taught three resurrections: 1) the true church to occupy a future millennium. 2) The 'Resurrection of the Ignorant' to occur after the millennium. Enlightened saints will teach them the ways of God unless they refuse this second chance. 3) The resurrection of sinners to a final resurrection. After which they are cast into the lake of fire to perish.

### *Church*

- Cultic (though has recently tried to reform after death of Herbert Armstrong).
- Only the WCG is the true church.

### *Anglo-Israelism*

- The once common idea that the lost ten tribes of Israel are now found in 'Anglo-Saxons'.<sup>58</sup>
- Armstrong uses all sorts of sophistry to argue this and also states that the British throne is the Davidic throne and that the Stone of Scone, on which British monarchs are crowned, was the stone used by Jacob for a pillow (it is actually, calcareous, a mineral from Scotland). [Cf. Mormonism.]

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<sup>58</sup> There is no such people. The term refers to the Angles and the Saxons that made up British culture along with Celts and Jutes.

## Appendix One

# Doctrinal summary

### Theology: Doctrine of God

#### **Modalist view of God**

- Oneness Pentecostalism.
- Swedenborgianism.

#### **Denial of the Trinity**

- Branhamism.
- Children of God.
- Christian Science.
- Christadelphianism.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Oneness Pentecostalism.
- Swedenborgianism.
- Unification Church (God is one Person with dual characteristics (male/female or positive/negative)).
- The Way (God is one spirit).
- Worldwide Church of God.

#### **Denial of God as pre-existent and eternal**

- Mormonism (God is an exalted man with a physical body).
- Worldwide Church of God (limitless gods as God re-creates himself in men).

#### **Denial of the person of God**

- Christian Science (God is life, love and mind).
- Unity School (God is universal intelligence).

#### **Mary cult**

- Roman Catholicism.

### Christology: Doctrine of Christ

#### **Wrong views of Jesus' person**

Jesus was not divine. Jesus was created. Jesus is an elevated man. Jesus is a spirit. Jesus did not have two natures.

- Children of God.
- Christadelphianism.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Worldwide Church of God.
- Christian Science (Jesus and Christ are separate. Jesus is a man while Christ is the ideal spirit).

- The Way.
- Unification Church.
- Mormonism.
- Unity (Jesus was a man inhabited by the Christ spirit principle).

### **Modern forms of Arianism**

- Christadelphianism.
- Mormonism.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- The Way.

### **Modern variants of Adoptionism**

- Unification Church (Jesus was a perfect man who attained deity).

### **Jesus is a mere man and not divine**

- The Way (Jesus is not equal with God, had no pre-existence, but is a man who became God's son).
- Christian Science (Jesus is man but Christ is a perfect ideal).
- Unity.

### **Denial of Jesus' physical resurrection**

- Unification Church.
- Worldwide Church of God.

### **Proposal of a different human saviour or mediator**

- Unification Church (Rev. Moon).
- Roman Catholicism (the Pope or Mary).
- Shakers (Ann Lee).

### **Focus on a human prophet or revelation**

- Branhamism (William Branham).
- Children of God (David Berg).
- Swedenborgianism (Emmanuel Swedenborg).
- Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy).
- The Way (Wierwille).

### **Everybody is divine**

- Mormonism.

## **Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

### **Denial of the personality of the Spirit**

- Christian Science.
- Children of God.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Christadelphians.

- The Way.
- Unification Church.
- Unitarianism.
- Unity.
- Worldwide Church of God.

### **The Spirit is a force or energy of God**

- Unification Church.
- Unitarianism.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Christadelphians.
- Unity.
- Worldwide Church of God.

## **Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation**

### **Wrong ideas about salvation: Arminianism**

- Methodism or Wesleyanism.
- Pentecostalism.
- Many Charismatics.

### **Wrong ideas about salvation: Amyraldism**

- New Calvinism.
- Certain branches of the Charismatic Movement, such as New Frontiers.

### **Wrong ideas about salvation: meritorious works (autosoterism)**

- Roman Catholicism.
- Swedenborgianism.
- Wesleyanism.
- Mormonism.
- The Way (the cross makes salvation possible only).
- Worldwide Church of God (Armstrongism).

### **Wrong ideas about salvation: universalism**

- Unitarians.
- Wesleyanism.
- The Emergent Church.
- Mormonism.

### **Wrong ideas about salvation: elitism**

- Branhamism.
- Campbellites (US Restorationists).
- Christadelphians.
- Roman Catholicism.
- The Way.

### **Denial of perseverance and assurance**

- Campbellites (US Restorationists).
- Arminians.
- Wesleyans.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **Christ cannot save certain sins**

- Mormonism.

### **Christ's blood is not efficacious**

- Christian Science.
- Unification Church (Jesus did not complete his mission to marry).
- The Way.
- Unity.

### **The cross was a moral example and not a substitutionary atonement**

Historically this was the position of many theological movements, such as the Moral Example school (Abelard), Grotianism, Socinianism etc.

- Unity (Jesus was a 'way-shower').
- Christian Science (Jesus was a 'way-shower').

### **Denial of sin**

- Christian Science.

## **Syncretism**

### **Syncretism of the occult with Christianity**

- Swedenborgianism.
- Unity School
- New Thought
- Christian Science.
- Religious Science.
- Shakers.
- Pentecostalism.
- Charismatic Movement.
- Branhamism.
- Latter Rain.
- Manifest Sons of God.

### **Syncretism of Neoplatonism with Christianity**

- Swedenborgianism.
- Quakers.

### **Syncretism of mysticism with Christianity**

- Swedenborgianism.

- Quakers.
- Shakers.
- Charismatic Movement.
- New Calvinism.
- Mormonism.

### **Syncretism of eastern religions with Christianity**

- New Thought.
- Swedenborgianism.
- Unity School.
- Signs and Wonders Movement.
- New Apostolic Reformation.

### **Syncretism of Mind Science with Christianity**

- Swedenborgianism.
- PP Quimby.
- Unity School
- New Thought
- Christian Science.
- Religious Science.
- Word of Faith.

### **Syncretism of Freemasonry with Christianity**

- Mormonism.

## **The Doctrine of Sanctification: Ethical errors**

### **Antinomian, licentious sects**

- Children of God.
- Many dubious revivalists.
- Wesleyan perfectionists.
- Wesleyan Camp Meetings.
- Some Charismatic churches and individuals, especially those that teach antinomianism (e.g. Terry Virgo, Gerald Coates).
- Some Pentecostal churches and individuals.
- Some Kansas City Prophets (e.g. Paul Cain, Bob Jones).
- The Way (the spirit is righteous but the body and soul sin).

### **Mystical sanctification**

- Sects influenced by Higher Life doctrines.
- Sects influenced by Postmodernism.
- Wesleyanism.
- Modern Pentecostalism.
- Holiness Movement.

### **Perfectionism (sinless perfection, instant sanctification)**

- Wesleyanism.
- Methodism.
- The Holiness Movement.
- Some Higher Life sects.
- Some Quakers.

## **Eschatology**

### **Christ has already come**

- Christian Science.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **Another messiah is to come**

- Unification Church.

### **Denial of hell**

- Children of God.
- Christian Science.
- Christadelphians.
- Unification Church (reincarnation proposed).
- Branhamism.
- Unitarians.
- Some Pentecostals (e.g. Parham).
- The Emerging Church.

### **Denial of hell for all but only a very few**

- Mormonism.

### **Purgatory (a temporary limbo)**

- Roman Catholicism.
- Mormonism.

## **Authority errors**

### **Rationalism, humanism, liberalism**

- Unitarian Church.
- Emerging Churches.

### **Rejection of the Bible for something else or adding a new revelation to the Bible**

- Mormonism (*Book of Mormon* / *Pearl of Great Price* / *Doctrine and Covenants* plus the revelations of prophets).
- Christian Science (*Science & Health with a key to the Scriptures*).
- Unity (the Bible as interpreted by the Fillmores).
- Seventh Day Adventists (works of 'prophet' EG White).

- Rhema churches.
- Branhamism (accepting the pyramids and astrology as divine revelation).
- Children of God (accepting the words of Moses Dave Berg).
- Unification Church (words of Moon, especially in *Divine Principle*).
- The Way (the Bible as interpreted by Wierwille).
- Roman Catholics (the Bible plus the Apocrypha, church tradition, and church authorities).
- Worldwide Church of God.

### **Denigration of the Bible**

- Gene Edwards.
- Many Pentecostal churches.
- Many Charismatic Churches.
- The Emerging Church.

### **Authoritarianism**

- Restoration churches and their progeny.
- Many Pentecostal churches.
- Roman Catholicism.
- Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Mormonism.
- Gene Edwards.
- Unification Church.



## Appendix Two

### Warning signs

#### **No focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ**

The focus always has to be Jesus Christ. THIS IS A KEY LAW OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND A KEY MEANS OF IDENTIFYING ERROR. Any time we see a ministry centre on something other than the Lord, we know there is something wrong. Sure there has to be an occasional emphasis upon this or that doctrine, or a warning on this or that heresy, but is the overall focus of a ministry Christ or something else? Godly ministry will keep returning to centre on the Lord and all its teaching will seek to glorify Christ.

#### **An over-emphasis upon the 'Spirit'**

Many cults and sects greatly overemphasise the work of what they call 'the Spirit' – but without actual reference to the Holy Spirit. Who knows what spirit is being addressed by them in their aberrations?

The Holy Spirit never highlights himself but always centres people upon Jesus Christ. He proceeds from the Father and the Son and his work is the fulfilment of that which is initiated by God the Father and accomplished by God the Son. This is why the Holy Spirit is never worshiped in the Bible; worship is centred on God the Father and Jesus Christ.

The reason for this is that when we worship God the Father we know exactly whom we are worshipping – it is the Almighty God, the Father of Jesus Christ, maker of heaven and Earth. When we worship Jesus we also know exactly whom we are referring to – the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind and the ruler of the universe.

When Charismatic radicals refer to the 'Spirit' there is no proof about whom they are interacting with. When Benny Hinn blows the 'Spirit' upon people and they fall over, that entity is not the Holy Spirit. We know this because God the Holy Spirit would not allow himself to be manipulated by men and commanded by men. You cannot blow the Spirit upon anyone; that is not how he works. We also know that occultists perform this sort of behaviour in many false religions, Hinn is merely copying occult behaviour and the spirit he is manipulating is not God.

Likewise in many Charismatic prophecies claiming to be from the Spirit, there is no evidence that this is from God, but there are many indications that it is not, such as failed prophecies, words that turn people away from the Bible or Biblical doctrines, appalling character of the prophet, and so on.

Godly ministry does not focus upon the Spirit but centres upon what the Holy Spirit focuses on – Jesus Christ. True ministry does not make a fuss about the power of the ministry being from the Holy Spirit; it simply becomes obvious in the fruit of the ministry.

Anyone that has to keep mentioning that their ministry is from the Spirit simply proves that it is not.

#### **A focusing on men**

This can take many forms.

It can involve centring on the authority of men in the church or in ministry. The dominant feature of a church is the authority of certain powerful men, such as apostles or prophets.

It can centre on the ability of people to do powerful things without reference or submission to God. Thus people can exhibit gifts of power or miracle working as a result of their internal abilities. Thus power gifts are intrinsic to the people rather than a result of supplicating God. Leaders who demand that people never pray, 'if God wills it' are examples of this.

It can involve giving men undue honour in meetings. For example, certain men enter the meeting in pomp and ceremony walking in after proceedings have begun, processing down an aisle with undue reverence being given them by the congregation.

It involves men attributing ministry or power to themselves instead of God.

It involves men claiming that they are the fulfilment of prophecies, or are a new messiah, or are some claimed resurrection of Elijah or somesuch.

Any work that centres upon a man in any sense is flawed.

### **Ignoring or abandoning Biblical doctrine**

Virtually all works that descend into cults demand early on that members ignore the restrictions of Biblical doctrine. This is usually stigmatised as formalism, legalism, intellectualism or tradition.

Doctrines restrict the Spirit, they will say. You need to be free to hear from God directly without mediation of written words. It is falsely claimed that hearing from the Spirit directly (how can you ever know it is the Holy Spirit?) is far more important than reading God's actual words in the Bible (which were inspired by the Spirit).

So people jettison God's own inspired word which has stood the test of time, in order to obey the mystical words that they imagine in their minds or receive from the imagined words of a prophet.

Sometimes leaders stress that Jesus is the Word of God and therefore we don't need the written words. But who determines that an imagined word is really Jesus speaking? What about when the imagined word contradicts Jesus' actual words in Scripture? Furthermore, Jesus stated that his final words were given to the apostles to record as doctrine, which the Holy Spirit would guide them into. Why do we need anything more? If the Bible and especially the NT (apostolic doctrine) are the final words of Jesus, then modern imagined words are not the words of Jesus. There is no new revelation.

The Holy Spirit today gives revelation or illumination on the basis of the written word that he inspired. That is, he highlights Scriptural teaching specifically suited to our present need. He does not give new revelation but only glorifies Jesus. We cannot add to the words of Jesus in Scripture.

### **Domineering control**

Authoritarianism is one of the chief signs of a cult. Blind submission to a church leader is a sign that you have been deluded by a cult.

### **Demands for money**

All cults and sects make demands for money to a certain degree. The more the demands, the more cultic the group is. The worst cults demand everything you own.

### **Demands to avoid other Christian churches**

Many are pure elitists claiming that their cult is the only salvation. However, others don't officially demand isolation but in practice this is what is expected in reality. Sometimes, the pressures of being in a sectarian church simply means that members have no time for fellowship with other believers and sometimes not even their own families or friends.

### **Emphasis upon prophecy above Scripture**

Most cults and many sects put an emphasis upon the words of the leaders, either formally or informally. Formally: the leader's (e.g. apostle) are authoritative and are received like Scripture; his word is sacrosanct. Informally: the leader's teaching is generally centred upon in practice rather than officially as doctrine.

It has been estimated by some researchers that only about 5% of modern churchgoers really study their Bible to any degree. This is because the words of leaders and prophecies are taken more seriously. In fact, some churches openly state that the words of prophets are more important than 'dead' Scriptures.

### **Emphasis of experience above doctrine**

Cults and sects tend to denigrate Scripture as the final authority for believers. The more the Bible is sidelined, the worse the group is.

To replace this sects usually give the words of men in various authoritative forms, such as apostolic strategy, leadership demands, the words of prophets and so on. In most cases, experience is more important than the Bible. Thus being baptised in the Spirit is more important than studying Scripture and is a reason for ecumenism – alliance with like-minded people even if they are heretics as regards doctrine.

### **Occult manifestations**

See the list later for examples of occult behaviour commonly seen in Charismatic churches today.

The Charismatic Movement has been nothing more than a Trojan Horse for the adoption of occult doctrines and practices that now swamp the church. It has been a means of demonic infiltration into evangelicalism to corrupt and destroy it. Many modern churches are no different to New Age cults.

### **Mysticism**

There are very many forms of mysticism, which is essentially a giving over of the will to an inner emotionalism and suggestibility in the belief that one is being united with the divine.

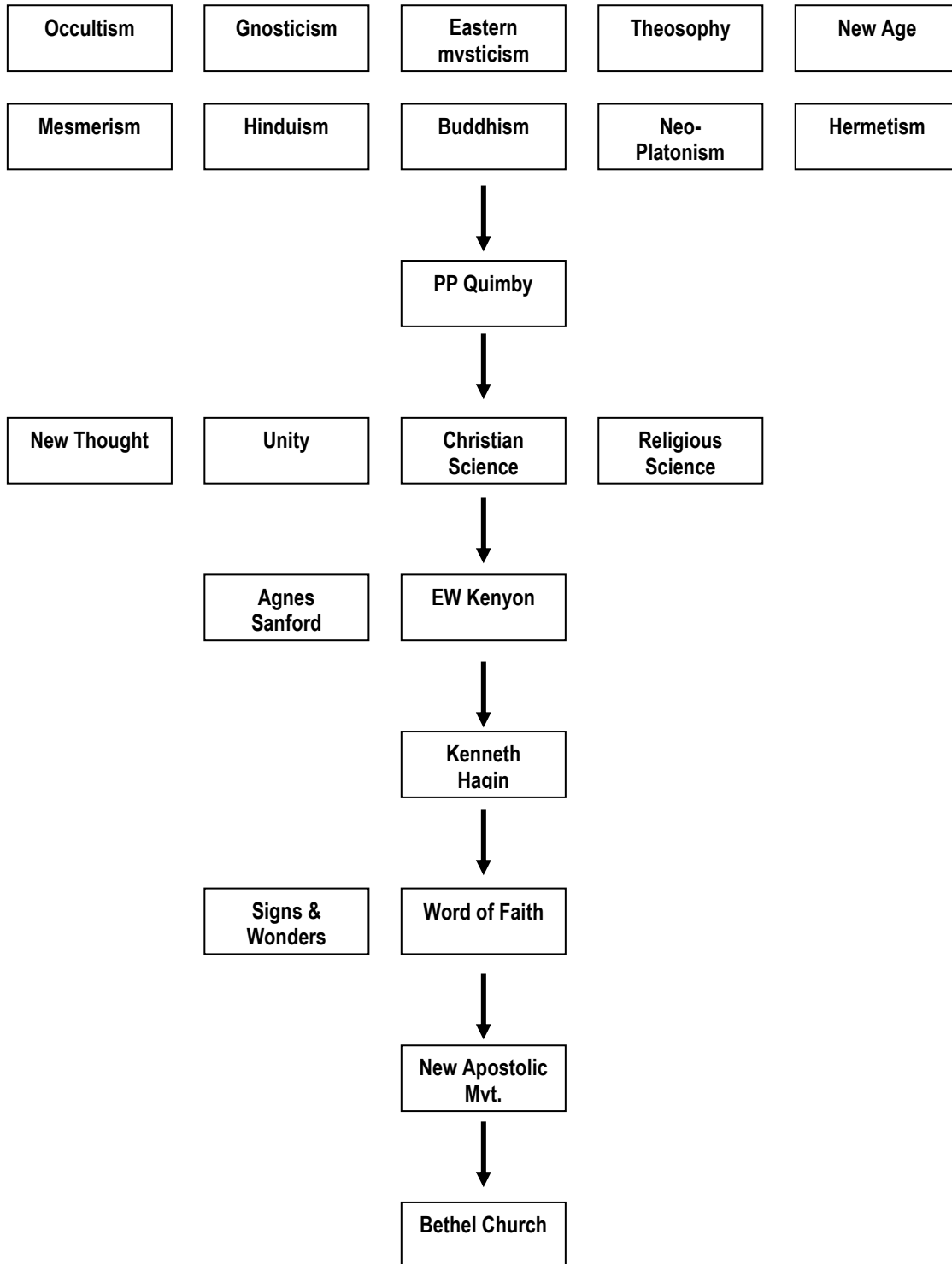
The various forms each have their own disciplines for achieving this submission to inner feelings: transformative prayer, asceticism, passivity, hypnosis, fasting, prolonged dancing, prolonged singing, prolonged meditation, singing in the Spirit and so on.

Often there will be a manifestation of unusual behaviour to accompany ever-deeper depths of subjective mysticism, which is like a form of hypnotism. These could include an initial shaking, altered state of consciousness, waving of hands etc. From there it could develop into shouting, screaming, or laughing uncontrollably. From there it could descend into trances that last hours, writhing on the floor or jumping in the air for hours. In severe cases manifestations can last days and can cause severe illness or psychological collapse. In very severe cases a subject can be subjected to enormous stress and survive, such as being hit with hammers, standing in freezing water for hours or bent backwards over a sharp object.

The initial stages of mysticism involve a deepening passivity, created by various methods (e.g. repetitive singing or chanting).

## Appendix Three

### Occult Roots



## Appendix Four

### Occult examples in modern churches

Occultism is divided into three sub-sections:

- **Magic:** the manipulation of nature by spells; the impartation of power to achieve your will.
- **Spiritualism:** communication with the spirit world of demons, often claiming to be dead people. This can be for knowledge in general or foreknowledge.
- **Divination:** seeking to know the future.

Each of these disciplines are based on man seeking to be like God and each one is further subdivided into very many methods to achieve this goal. For example divination would include: reading tea leaves, augury, the I-Ching, astrology, numerology, seances, palm reading, crystal balls, tarot card readings and many more.

Modern Charismania has adopted most of these aspects of occultism under different names and slightly different techniques.

#### Forms of magic

- *Shamanistic healing:* psychosomatic 'healing' after passivity induced by prolonged meetings, music and worship.
- *Words of knowledge for healing.* Especially if based upon revelation given by an angel (as in the case of Branham).
- *Visualisation:* e.g. 4th Dimension, name it and claim it. Using magic to gain desired objects.
- *Inner healing:* healing of emotions by using imagination techniques.
- *Fetishes:* use of objects to wield supernatural power, such as crosses, washed stones, putting your head into a large honey-pot to be filled with the Spirit (Bethel) etc.
- *Gemstones:* used to aid healing and meditation.
- *Supernatural powers:* claims that spirit-filled believers can fly, hover in space, walk through walls, be invulnerable to bullets etc.
- *Manipulation of the weather:* claims that people can change the weather by certain incantations or rituals (such as rain dancing).<sup>59</sup>
- *Manipulation of authorities:* claims that apostles and their followers can change governments, councils, and administrations through certain actions; such as: fasting, corporate prayer, marching round the room or an area (e.g. praise marches), exorcisms etc.
- *Manipulation of churches:* e.g. seeking to bring about regional revival through magical means. E.g. blowing a ram's horn on the South Downs or an evangelist throwing a bottle of oil into a river as an expression of 'prophetic symbolism' in order to encourage an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Australia.<sup>60</sup>
- *Manipulation of people:* e.g. 'knighting' people with a sword to impart power in their spiritual warfare or burning notes of personal problems on an altar to get rid of stress.

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<sup>59</sup> Yes this has happened, e.g. one group in Wales associated with Gerald Coates in the mid-90s.

<sup>60</sup> *Vanguard*, Issue 10, May 1999, p9.

## Forms of spiritualism

- *Channelling*: e.g. spirit-guides, personal angels.
- *Necromancy*: e.g. 'grave-sucking'. Seeking to gain power in ministry by receiving the 'mantle' of a dead person.
- *Coloured auras*: observed in Vineyard ministry. Used to refine ministry.
- *Claims of OT type prophecy*: authoritative words from God. Direct knowledge from God, such as personal prophecy or church direction.
- *New revelation*: denigration of Scripture, doctrine formed by men. Revelation used to determine new doctrine.
- *Exorcism*: deliverance ministry, affliction of multiple demons in Christians, territorial spirits ruling towns, spiritual warfare methods.
- *Tongues*: speaking gibberish instead of unlearned human languages. (Tongues are claimed to be the languages of angels – i.e. demonically inspired ranting.)
- *Mind Sciences*: Mesmerism, hypnotism, altered states of consciousness.

## Forms of divination

- *Pure divination*: e.g. Destiny Cards, personal prophecy. The cards are claimed to be prophetic, i.e. fetishes.
- *Mysticism*: passivity to induce feelings of inner divinity, lack of self-control, mystical disciplines to gain illumination.
- *Revelations*. Visions, dreams, personal revelations claimed to be from God, a 'now' word etc.
- *Foretelling prophecy*. Which always fail.

## Occult expressions:

- *Pure occult behaviour*: Falling over backwards (slain in the Spirit), prolonged screaming, crying, jumping, writhing, rolling around, animal noises etc. These exhibit lack of self-control and a giving over to a demonic force.
- *Dancing*: abandonment to emotions.
- *Singing in the Spirit*: a corporate giving over to a common mystical source; a yielding of the will to an emotional stimulus. Note that such singing is never interpreted, which would be a minimal Biblical demand.
- *Corporate shouted prayer*. Prayer must be intelligible so that everyone can say, 'Amen'.
- *Aspirations for global power*. E.g. desire for global apostolic revival resulting in control over governments.

## Appendix Five

### A concise Biblical analysis of spiritual gifts

#### Introduction

Very many sects and cults base their experience upon a certain mystical or occult interpretation of the spiritual grace gifts (*charisma* – gift of grace) mentioned in the NT.<sup>61</sup> This is especially true of the Pentecostal and Charismatic sects. Every Charismatic-type manifestation in history has involved a syncretism of the occult with Christianity<sup>62</sup> and almost always resulted in failure,<sup>63</sup> criminal proceedings,<sup>64</sup> craziness,<sup>65</sup> chaos,<sup>66</sup> abuse,<sup>67</sup> scandal<sup>68</sup> and sometimes a conflagration.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to examine what the true meanings of these gifts are.

#### The NT passages

##### *The overriding principles*

Since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, *let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel. 1 Cor 14:12

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Pt 4:10-11

##### *Leadership gifts to the church*

And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph 4:11-12

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations [*kubernesis* – leadership], varieties of tongues. *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 1 Cor 12:28-30

##### *Grace gifts to edify the church*

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 1 Cor 12:7-11

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<sup>61</sup> 1 Cor 12:1, 14:1, 12 do not mention the word 'gift', it is rather 'spirituals' or 'spiritual things'. Heb 2:4, 'gifts of the Holy Spirit'. Rm 12:6, 1 Cor 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31 *charisma*. Eph 4:8, *doma*.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. New Thought, New Light Prophets, the Montanists, the Shakers,

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Paul Cain.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. Jim Bakker.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Latter Rain.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. The French Prophets or Azusa Street.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. Frank Sandford or the Jesus Army.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. The Catholic Apostolic Church in London or Aimee Semple McPherson.

<sup>69</sup> E.g. The Munster tragedy during the Reformation.



Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Rm 12:6-8

### **The Charismatic interpretation**

The key word is 'supernatural'. The basis of Charismatic doctrine regarding grace gifts is that they are paranormal ministries that enable men to be like God with supernatural power. Thus we have the use of various expressions relating to 'power', 'supernatural', 'dynamite', 'fire', 'enabling' and so on.

The basis of these gifts is Arminian in thinking. All Christians are entitled to a special second blessing experience, which is mystical in nature based on personal faith and will. This is called the Baptism in the Spirit (BIS) and this is necessary for power to minister. In practice the Charismatic version of this always requires transmission from one person to another by the laying on of hands (just like occult ministries do).

Without this mystical experience you cannot use the gifts and you are living a second class life. This creates a two-tier system in churches of the have and have-nots. It therefore promotes elitism and pride. It also derogates all godly believers in history prior to 1901 to second class status, including giants of faith. Thus it claims that alcoholic,<sup>70</sup> adulterous,<sup>71</sup> sodomite<sup>72</sup> Pentecostal leaders had the fulness of the Spirit but Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon, Toplady, Brainerd, WC Burns, Tyndale, Bunyan, Ames, Perkins, Owen, Wycliffe and Whitefield did not.

In practice, multiple denominations place a different meaning on what the BIS does. Wesleyans taught that it resulted in perfect sanctification as a baptism of perfect love. Charles Finney taught that it was a baptism of power. The Holiness Movement averred that it resulted in a form of holiness, an improved sanctification, but not necessarily instant perfection (though some Holiness sects did believe this). Classical Pentecostals taught that it always resulted in tongues as the initial evidence of the BIS and that these were to be used by missionaries to speak foreign languages without learning them. Experience proved this to be false and this notion was dropped. However, many classical Pentecostals (e.g. Assemblies of God) still teach that tongues are necessary initial evidence for every believer (contrary to 1 Cor 12:30) but some Pentecostals (e.g. Bosworth) and many Charismatics deny this. Most Charismatics teach that it results in spiritual gifts in general. Some claim that it results in power to witness or to prophesy. Others teach that it results in edification of the church while yet others claim that it boosts faith to claim desires. The list stretches to over a dozen interpretations. There is no unanimity here – only confusion.

**For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:13**

The Biblical truth is that the promised baptism in/with<sup>73</sup> the Spirit is a baptism into Christ by the Holy Spirit. This is the uniting of the believer into the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit. It is applied to the believer at conversion. 'Baptised' is an aorist verb meaning that it refers to a once for all action in the past with reverberations today. It happened at the cross when all believers were spiritually united into Christ and was first applied at Pentecost when Christ was glorified in heaven. Believers were co-crucified and

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<sup>70</sup> E.g. AA Allen.

<sup>71</sup> E.g. Kathryn Kuhlman.

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Charles Parham.

<sup>73</sup> Matt 3:11, Mk 1:8, Lk 3:16, Acts 1:5 has 'with' in the NKJV. The Greek word *en* can mean 'with' or 'in'.

co-raised with Christ (Rm 6:4, 6; Eph 2:6) and immersed in the Spirit. Charismatics are wrong in teaching that the BIS happens over and over again, all the time.

The main issues here are that Charismatics teach: 1) that the BIS is a second blessing, post conversion, mystical experience; 2) it results in supernatural gifts to serve various purposes; 3) it results from a personal decision to believe in time; if you fail you miss out.

Gaining this experience also varies in different groups. It used to arrive from 'Tarrying meetings' where people continued meeting for many hours wearing themselves out until passive enough to get a mystical experience. Many practice laying on of hands to pass it on (in practice this always occurs, even during tarrying, or fasting or falling backwards etc.). Some demand extended prayer and fasting. Others aver that it just happens in a powerful praise meeting. Yet others insist that being slain in the Spirit (falling over) is required.

The individual gifts are then interpreted to mean supernatural things, which again have various meanings to different groups. In general Charismatics interpret these to mean gifts that are similar to occult expressions in the world used by a shaman (witch, sorcerer, magician).

We could list these as:

- The word of wisdom. Usually ignored by Charismatics.
- The word of knowledge. Interpreted as prescience, often required to initiate healing.
- Faith. Various explained or ignored. Word of Faith groups see this as positive confession to gain desires.
- Gifts of healings. Various interpreted. Most centre upon physical healing but some also focus upon emotional healing (inner healing) as well. Claims of raisings from the dead have never been proved and many claimed healings have proved to be false.
- The working of miracles. This usually means healing. Virtually no one claims to express this gift in judgment, unlike the apostles or Jesus.
- Prophecy. Often sub-divided into a) formal, official prophetic ministry; b) lesser prophecies by ordinary members. The former often claim foreknowledge (though these always fail).
- Discerning of spirits. This is usually applied to exorcists and is a method to enable correct deliverance from spirits by identifying their type.
- Kinds of tongues. Always results in gibberish and is often claimed to be the tongues of angels (who don't speak because they are immaterial, having no physical tongues).<sup>74</sup>
- The interpretation of tongues. Self-explanatory.

These nine are the ones most centred upon, but in reality it is tongues, the word of knowledge, prophecy and healing that are the chief focus. All the Charismatic expressions are commonly found in occult movements, such as New Age, Wicca, Shamanism, Gnosticism, Hinduism, Voodoo etc. Witches and spiritualists were present and happy in the Azusa Street 'revival' meetings.

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<sup>74</sup> 1 Cor 13:1, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels', is poetry that uses angels as a superlative creation to make a point. Thus, 'even if I had the most supernatural tongues this is not as important as love'. When appearing as men they are adopting human form under a divine miracle assuming a body they do not possess naturally.

## The Biblical explanation

### *The overriding principles*

Zeal for spiritual gifts must be motivated by a desire to edify the church, not satisfy the individual. Personal issues are not the point; gifts are for developing and equipping the church (1 Cor 14:12).

Gifts are for ministering to others not yourself. By exercising the gift you act as a steward of God to minister help to brethren. The gift is exercised by grace; you do it with the ability and power of God as he supplies it. If God is not supplying power, do not try to force the gift; shut up. The whole point of using the gifts is that God is glorified through Jesus Christ. As the body is built up by the gift, Jesus is glorified and God's testimony is magnified (1 Pt 4:10-11).

### *Leadership gifts*

God gives gifts of men to the church to lead it properly and equip the saints. These gifts are:

- Apostles. These are divided into two categories in Scripture. 1) **The apostles of the lamb** are special (Rev 21:14). These had to witness the resurrection, know Jesus' ministry (Acts 1:21-22) and exhibit signs (2 Cor 12:12). They had supernatural power to authenticate that their ministry was from God (Heb 2:3-4). These apostles ceased and never appear again. They are the foundation of the church with the OT prophets and Christ as the corner stone (Eph 2:20). 2) **The apostles of the churches** (2 Cor 8:23; 'messengers' = 'apostles'). These are church planters. They have no authority in the established church whatsoever but are elders or evangelists at home. They have authority over a church plant until elders are appointed by them, then the church is an independent local church. Apostles are not archbishops ruling over multiple churches. Apostles of the churches include: Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25), Andronicus and Junia<sup>75</sup> (Rm 16:7) or Titus (2 Cor 8:23).
- Prophets. The formal prophetic gift as a powerful miraculous ministry that includes forthtelling and foretelling (like Elijah) ceased at the appearance of the New Covenant where all believers in Christ are prophets (proclaiming the Gospel is a prophetic act). John the Baptist was the last of these (Matt 11:13). Prophecy in the early church was widespread and included women (Acts 21:9). This was necessary because the NT had not been written and published and the OT scrolls were rare and expensive. This prophecy was chiefly encouragement (1 Cor 14:31), edification, comfort and exhortation (1 Cor 14:3) based on apostolic doctrine. A few people were given the gift of foretelling (e.g. Agabus) to help the church survive (Acts 11:28). Prophecy in this form continues today, and is chiefly found in powerful teaching and preaching. Prophecy is chiefly ministering the word of God to his people with power, i.e. more than didactics. Occasionally there is genuine foretelling when necessary (e.g. Alexander Peden).
- Evangelists. These are men gifted to lead the church in evangelism.
- Pastor-teachers. These two words are joined together in the Greek. They speak of the ministry of an elder who is both a shepherd and a teacher of the flock.

These ministries were sometimes given other names in a flexible manner. Elders are thus 'leaders' or 'rulers' (*proistemi*, 1 Tim 5:17; *hegeomai*, Heb 13:7, 17, 24), 'pilots' or 'steersmen' (*kubernesis*, 1 Cor 12:28), bishops (*episkope*, 'overseer', 1 Tim 3:1; *episkopos*, 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7) etc. Sometimes the change was cultural; 'elders' was a Jewish term while 'bishops' was Greek.

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<sup>75</sup> Not a female name.

There is no other leader in a local church than an elder and a team of elders govern the church in parity. All other leadership functions are false. (Deacons serve the church in a pragmatic, not a spiritual manner. They distribute to the needy but have no oversight.) Evangelists and apostles are usually elders appointed to this ministry for a time. It is possible that apostles and evangelists may be non-elders but ordinary members called to this task under the oversight of elders. Prophecy is centred in the pastor through his teaching. Thus certain pastors will excel in this.

### *The corporate grace gifts*

- The word of wisdom. This is equivalent to the ministry of a pastor. It is being able to counsel with wisdom.
- The word of knowledge. This is the ministry of teaching, instruction, didactics, imparting knowledge.
- Faith. This is primarily saving faith, the faith that results in conversion, which is a gift from God. It can then mean special faith to trust in God above problems, especially sickness (Jm 5:15).
- Gifts of healings. God still heals but this is rarely seen today as the purpose of early church healings and miracles was to authenticate the message of the Gospel in the apostles. Pentecostals are totally wrong about healing in the atonement as an automatic right and that all believers should never be sick unless they have poor faith. Note that apostolic workers were often sick and not healed by Paul (Timothy, 1 Tim 5:23; Trophimus, 2 Tim 4:20; Epaphroditus, Phil 2:25-26). Jesus healed people that showed no prior faith and also healed only one person out of many sick people (Jn 9:1-7). Healing comes today via prayer (Jm 5:15).
- The working of miracles. Though not disappeared entirely, it is now rare since the Bible and the Gospel have been authenticated and proved. However, it can sometimes, by God's grace, be seen. Miracles include acts of judgment (e.g. against Elymas, Acts 13:9-11).
- Prophecy. See above.
- Discerning of spirits. This has nothing to do with exorcism. It is the ability to see the root issues of a heretic (1 Jn 4:1). Elders need this gift.
- Kinds of tongues. Tongues were originally a sign to outsiders to testify to the power of God in the church and the Gospel (1 Cor 14:22). The power of this testimony was the speaking of existing human languages (not gibberish) by people that had not been taught that language; they were a mystery to the speaker (Acts 2:4ff; 1 Cor 14:2). Tongues were not prophecies (which is common in Pentecostal services) but prayers glorifying God (1 Cor 14:2). Tongues do not edify the church (because they are for outsiders) they only make the speaker feel good (1 Cor 14:4). Tongues, with many miracles and healings, were a sign of the power of God in the Gospel in the early church. They authenticated the preaching of the apostles. Paul said that they would cease (1 Cor 13:8) and all accept that they did cease after the apostolic age. Pentecostals and Charismatics teach that they appeared again in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the word 'cease' means 'to cease forever'. In fact gibberish tongue-speaking occurred from time to time in history but always in aberrant, apostate, ecstatic, mystical groups for a short time before being scandalised (such as the Montanists, the French Prophets, Shakers, The Catholic Apostolic Church etc.). Thus tongues are not available today.
- The interpretation of tongues. In the days when tongues were active, all speaking of such in church (no more than three, 1 Cor 14:27) had to be interpreted to glorify God (1 Cor 14:27-28). The demand to interpret tongues means that corporate singing in the spirit as a mystical chant (a common occult feature) was always unbiblical. Biblical singing in the Spirit in the apostolic age was individual and was interpreted.

- Ministry. The gift to serve the saints in God's name in some manner.
- Teaching. See 'elders' above. Teaching begins in a person growing in the gift in the fellowship until it progresses to the point where it is recognised and the person is ordained as an elder. Only men can teach (1 Tim 2:12) and elders must be able to teach (2 Tim 2:14). There is no such thing as a division between teaching and ruling elders, or such thing as a senior pastor.
- Exhortation. Buoying people up when they are down. Encouraging towards a certain goal.
- Giving. A vital ministry in the church. The giving of money and goods to those in need.
- Hospitality. Sharing your home with a person in need (Rm 12:13).
- Leading. See 'elders'. *Kubernesis* (1 Cor 12:28) does not mean the job of an administrator. It is a description of church leadership (being a steersman) that resides in elders. Elders are many things: they shepherd (pastor), they teach, they counsel, they admonish, they exhort, they evangelise, and they steer the ship of the church.
- Showing mercy (Rm 12:8). Forgiving the sins of others, helping the afflicted, being patient with offenders, being longsuffering towards offenders. It is a necessary characteristic of being an elder.

### **Conclusion**

The grace gifts are nothing to do with making men move in the supernatural like God. This is an occult notion and is based on the original temptation of the Devil, to make man like God.

The gifts are designed to help the church be equipped to grow in grace.

The focus of Charismatics on a supernatural explanation of the BIS and the grace gifts explains why so many occult manifestations now appear in these churches.

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