

**Eschatology**  
New Church (UK)

the  
***Eschatology***  
of the  
new church  
movement (UK)  
1970-1996

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The material in this publication is a reprint (with a few adjustments) of the thesis submitted for the degree of Mater of Theology in 1997. The original submission being entitled:

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An Analysis of the Eschatology

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by

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## **A note on this (web) version**

The text of this version is essentially the same as that of the thesis presented to Brunel University. I have removed one appendix that was simply the questionnaire sent to churches. I have also changed the heading on page 65 where the heading 'Statistics and sociologists' has been changed to 'Statistics and sociological perspectives'. A further change is wherever Greek is quoted I have changed from the Greek script to a more common transliteration.

Pagination has also changed. If this version is quoted from there should be an acknowledgement that the version quoted from is the version as posted on the internet at:

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***It should also be noted that this is an historical examination of the Eschatology associated with the diverse 'streams' of New Church, and as such is a snapshot to the date of submission of the thesis. Any conclusions drawn might not remain accurate.***

## **Preface**

### **Acknowledgements**

I owe a number of people for the help and encouragement given me while preparing this thesis, without whom I would not have been able to complete it. I would like in particular to thank:

- 1) David Erasmus, Ian Farr, Jim Holl and Tony Pullin for providing me with written publications that reflected either the early House Church movement period or the Latter Rain movement.
- 2) Those that gave me time and pointed me in the right direction when interviewed either formally or informally.
- 3) Those from within the Pioneer 'stream' of 'New Church' who made significant comments on the material from their own perspective and experience.
- 3) Meic Pearse as my supervisor. I have appreciated the guidance and help along the way.
- 4) The Pioneer Trust who donated finances which enabled the thesis to be undertaken in the first place.

### **Abstract**

This thesis is intended to examine the eschatology of the church movement in the United Kingdom often known as the 'House Church Movement'. It consists of three parts. The first part is a historical survey showing how the movement developed and why a distinctive eschatology was formed. In part two the development and diversification of the eschatology is considered which concludes with a classification of eschatology

within the New Churches.

Part three then looks forward in two ways: first, through suggesting a revision of the eschatology in such a way that extremes are avoided, without losing some of the core distinctives, I suggest that there is a contribution that the New Church eschatology can make to the wider church; and second, having suggested a revision there remains a challenge both to the New Churches and from the New Churches resulting from the distinctive eschatology.

The final chapter is followed by appendices and a bibliography.

# **Part 1: From Ecclesiology to Eschatology**



# Chapter 1

## An Introduction to the “New Church” Movement

In order to understand the theology of the ‘New Church’ movement, something of its history needs to be understood. Like many church movements that lay claim to their existence as a direct result of the work of the Spirit, ‘New Church’ theology is less creedal and more narrative-based than that of more established church expressions.<sup>1</sup> Their theology, therefore, is in dialogue with their experience and history, and for this reason a historical approach is vital if the eschatology is to be understood, and further that the eschatology is seen as but one aspect of a set of beliefs that cohere. Prior to looking at the historical development, though, is the need to bring some definition to the terms.

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1 In *Fire From Heaven*, (Reading: MA Addison-Wesley, 1994), Harvey Cox described his journey into the inner workings and beliefs of Pentecostalism. He observed that the writing of theological works from within the movement was a relatively recent event as historically Pentecostals ‘have felt more at home singing their theology, or putting it in pamphlets for distribution on street corners’ (p. 15). This is also true for the New Church movement, with very little written that is of a formal theological nature; perhaps the theology of the movement could also be discovered in the songs that are written by those within the movement.

## Definition of Terms

### ***House Church / New Church movement***

It seems that virtually all who have written on the movement that has commonly been known as 'The House Church Movement', and more recently referred to as 'The New Church Movement', readily confess that there is a considerable problem of nomenclature and with it the giving of precise definitions.<sup>2</sup> Although I do not wish to reiterate in detail that problem and, for the sake of brevity, will refer to the overall movement under examination by the abbreviation HCM, it is necessary to give some background to the distinct groups (or 'streams' as they prefer to call themselves) that make up this diverse, yet related, movement. I will use the term 'HCM' to describe all church groups that, at least in measure, subscribe to a 'Restorationist' perspective of church history and hold to a belief in the continuance of both the apostolic and prophetic ministries.<sup>3</sup>

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2 See for instance Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985, revised 1988 and reprinted 1989), 25-27. (Unless otherwise indicated all page numbers will be to the 1989 edition); Nigel Wright, Restoration and the house church movement, *Themelios* 16.2 (Jan. / Feb. 1991), 4

3 'Restorationists' view church history from the perspective that God has been restoring truth to the church particularly from the time of the Reformation. The HCM are simply the recipients of new truth in line with radical disciples of Christ. This is not a particularly new view; the book *The Pilgrim Church* by E. H. Broadbent (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1931), espoused this view. From within the movement David Matthew has written a book outlining this approach to history entitled,

Andrew Walker in *Restoring the Kingdom: The radical Christianity of the House Church Movement*<sup>4</sup> effectively introduced the inner workings and structure of the HCM to a wider audience, particularly describing its two main wings under the algebraic notation of R1 and R2. Post-1976 and up until the early 1980s these two broad categories, though necessarily simplistic, were probably adequate. In 1991 Wright gave an updated assessment<sup>5</sup>, in which he shows how the movement had further diversified. Stating that at ‘the beginning of the 1990s Restorationism may be seen to be more varied than ever’, he goes on to illustrate his point by highlighting ten distinct groups on a spectrum that, he says, is ‘drawn as it were from right to left according to the degree of sectarian otherness which the groups of churches feel about themselves over against the wider church’.<sup>6</sup> Using the spectrum that Wright describes as a basis it will be useful to highlight the groups that are pertinent to this thesis. There are four groups - two at either end of Wright’s spectrum<sup>7</sup> - that can be ignored

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*Church Adrift: Where in the World are we going?* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1985). Restorationism then speaks of restoring the New Testament pattern of church. It also has eschatological overtones in that the true church is to be part of Gods agent in participating in the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).

4 1985 was the original publication date with a revision and update in 1988. Inevitably since that date there have been further developments.

5 ‘Restoration’.

6 Ibid., 5.

7 The four groups are: 1) churches around G.W. North and

for the sake of our discussions: thus leaving three groups that were once aligned under Walker's R1 (Covenant Ministries led by Bryn Jones, New Frontiers International led by Terry Virgo, and the Salt and Light network led by Barney Coombs);<sup>8</sup> one independent group that Walker described as leaning toward an R1 approach;<sup>9</sup> two groups that have merged into one (Pioneer led by Gerald Coates and Team Spirit led by John Noble) and are the central focus of Walker's R2 division; and finally Ichthus Christian Fellowship (under

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South Chard (although these were distinct groups they can be placed together as they both predate the modern movement, and are in some way forerunners of the HCM); 2) the Bugbrooke Community and the Jesus Army with its distinctive brand of evangelism and community living; then on the other end of the spectrum: 3) a group of churches around David Tomlinson which, by the time of writing, was no longer together as a distinct unit; and 4) the looser knit groups such as those around Peter Fenwick and the Sheffield House Church. These four groups do not sufficiently fit the criteria of Restorationism to be considered as falling within this current thesis.

8 'Salt and Light' which emerged from the former Basingstoke Baptist Church under the leadership of Barney Coombs was not officially linked with R1 but Walker placed it here as its 'style' fitted best within this category. Virgo and Jones worked together in the mid-70s onward as did another group, known as Cornerstone Ministries, under the leadership of Tony Morton. This Southampton-based ministry is not mentioned by Wright.

9 A group of churches that had their focal point in the King's Church, Aldershot. Wright wrongly states that this was associated with Derek Brown and Mike Pusey. Pusey, by then, had left the King's Church.

the leadership of Roger Forster). Although Walker placed Ichthus at the edges of Restorationism it must be included in any discussion of eschatology as Forster has been influential from the very beginning of the developing HCM eschatology.

I suggest that in an examination of HCM eschatology the groups that should figure prominently in any discussion should be based on two criteria:

- 1) those groups that have had key personnel who were involved during the initial and formative period, and
- 2) the groups that still hold, at least in measure, to a Restorationist approach.

Applying the above criteria the key groups to be considered are: Covenant Ministries, New Frontiers, Salt and Light, Pioneer, and Ichthus Christian Fellowship. The eschatologies within those specific groups will be examined in due course and Walker's notation of R1 / R2 will be used, when historically appropriate, and also as a useful means by which the two main expressions of HCM can be identified and their subsequent development monitored.

## ***Baptism in the Spirit, Pentecostalism and House Churches***

The HCM was part of the wider Charismatic Movement which found, in the main, its theology of the Spirit within the Pentecostal tradition.<sup>10</sup> The term 'baptised by / in the

<sup>10</sup>The distinctive feature of Pentecostalism was its belief in the baptism in the Spirit as a subsequent experience to conversion so 'The baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues is the distinctive

Spirit' or 'baptism in the Spirit' will be used in describing the experience of the Spirit that was a major uniting factor for those who were involved in the foundations of the movement. This terminology is used simply because it was the preferred term by those within the early phase of the HCM: an examination of the theology that underlies this usage is beyond the scope of this thesis. Although there is evidence that some within the HCM have moved away from a classical Pentecostal 'second-blessing' understanding, this probably is still the predominant view and was all-but universally accepted during the formative period of the HCM.

In early Pentecostalism, baptism in the Spirit along with speaking in tongues, was seen as a major sign that the end was imminent. Glossalalia (at times understood as xenolalia) indicated that the purpose of this experience was missionary, which in turn gave the Pentecostal movement an intense eschatological outlook.<sup>11</sup> As will be discovered, the HCM did not share this understanding, rather the baptism in the Spirit indicated that a process of restoration was continuing, and would continue until the church reached maturity.

## **Wallis, Lillie and the conferences**

Although it is probably accurate to suggest that the

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doctrine of Pentecostalism' (Kenneth Archer 'Pentecostal Hermeneutics', *JPT* 8, 63); and 'Spirit-baptism... is the kernel doctrine of classical Pentecostal movements' (Tak-Ming Cheung 'Understandings of Spirit-Baptism', *JPT* 8, 115).

11See Steven Land's article 'A Passion for the Kingdom: Revisioning Pentecostal Spirituality' *JPT* 1 (October 1992).

HCM began to take shape within the period 1970-74<sup>12</sup> there were strong influences that went back at least a further decade that are important to understand if we are to grasp how the HCM developed the way it did. There is universal consensus that Arthur Wallis (1923-1988) was the main catalyst for the growth of the HCM<sup>13</sup> and the roots can be traced back to his own spiritual journey and the conferences he, along with David Lillie, organised from 1958.<sup>14</sup>

Wallis was for many years well known for his book on revival called *In the Day of Thy Power - the Scriptural Principles of Revival*.<sup>15</sup> A passion for revival had been with Wallis for many years and had even led him to travel to the Hebrides where he met Duncan Campbell in 1951. This visit further stirred him to believe that if God could bring revival to Wales (1904-05) and to the Hebrides that God could 'do it again'.<sup>16</sup>

It was in 1952 that Wallis met David Lillie and soon

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12Walker, *Restoring*, 72 says that, 'By 1974, I believe the Restorationist movement had become tentatively established with distinctive doctrines, leadership, and liturgical practices.'

13Walker, *ibid.*, 44, states, 'Wallis can claim not only the early vision but also considerable influence in the way that vision unfolded'.

14The conferences cover the period from 1958-1965 and are an essential part of HCM history and theological development. Only through tracing this historical development is it really possible to see why a distinctive eschatology developed.

15Published in 1956 (London: CLC).

16Jonathan Wallis recounts this visit in the biography of his father, *Arthur Wallis: Radical Christian* (Eastbourne: Kingsway 1991), 88-92.

realised that they were of 'kindred spirit'. Lillie could state that, 'As soon as I met Arthur Wallis, I knew (and I think he knew) this was a meeting which had been ordered by the Lord.'<sup>17</sup> Wallis and Lillie were both from a Brethren background and they discovered that they had a mutual friend and mentor in G. H. Lang, a free-thinking Bible teacher from the Plymouth Brethren.<sup>18</sup> Lillie had first met Lang in 1937 and was to write that, 'It was particularly Lang's personal commitment to biblical Christianity and ecclesiology which stimulated my desire to see the recovery of some semblance of authentic New Testament church life in my lifetime. I could not

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17 *Restoration: Is this still on Gods Programme?* (Devon: Private Publication, 1994), 12.

18 F. F. Bruce in his own memoirs, *In Retrospect* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1980), 114, wrote of George Lang (1874-58), 'It was an enriching experience to get to know Mr. Lang, although it required at times considerable resolution to resist the strength with which he would press his convictions on one (in the most gracious possible manner indeed)'. Although Lang was opposed to speaking in tongues his influence on a number of those involved in the early days of the HCM was considerable. He wrote commentaries on both Daniel (1940) and Revelation (1945), with both having forewords written by F. F. Bruce. Certain aspects of his eschatology were to shape some of the early HCM perspectives but his main influence on Wallis and Lillie at this stage appears to be on the nature of the church. His book *The Churches of God*, (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1928, revised 1959), was read by many of those within the HCM. This alongside Watchman Nee's writings on the church (*The Normal Christian Church Life*, and *The Glorious Church*, both published Los Angeles: Stream Publishers, 1962 and 1968 respectively) were some of the key ecclesiological influences on the HCM as it developed.



conceive that anything less than that could satisfy the heart of Him who is the Head of the Church.’<sup>19</sup>

Lillie had a vision for the restoration of church life to a New Testament pattern and had already left the Brethren and by this time led a small fellowship at Countess Wear. These views were a challenge and a stimulus to Wallis’ own thoughts and it is clear that over the ensuing years Wallis came to embrace the vision that Lillie had shared with him.<sup>20</sup>

Between them they put on a number of local conferences at Countess Wear aimed at spreading their convictions on the renewal of the church in the power of the Spirit. A prominent speaker who was to influence those, and later, conferences, was Cecil Cousens, whom Lillie and Wallis first met around 1953 / 54. Cousens had been brought up in the Apostolic Church and had also experienced the Latter Rain Movement while in Canada between 1949-51. Soon after his return to the UK he had to resign his ordination from the Apostolic Church and had subsequently initiated an independent fellowship in Bradford in 1953.<sup>21</sup> It was

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19Lillie, *Restoration*, 11f.

20Chapter 9 of Wallis, *Arthur*, recounts this period in Wallis’ life.

21Both the Apostolic Church and the Latter Rain Movement were important factors in the HCM. The former can be seen as influential on the later view of apostolic ministry (see Walker, *Restoring*, 249-253); the latter also maintained a similar line on apostolic ministry but the area where the HCM was greatly influenced by this North American movement was in its eschatology. Although Cousens did not fully embrace either of the above movements it seems very likely that these two influences were part of the early HCM.

these initial conferences that paved the way for a series of conferences for leaders, the first of which took place at Exmouth in May 1958. This conference was entitled 'The Church of Jesus Christ: Its Purity, Pattern and Programme in the Context of Today', and of the twenty five people present there were some who were to be leaders in the later HCM, including Graham Perrins<sup>22</sup> and Roger Forster.<sup>23</sup> This conference was followed by a slightly larger one in September 1961 at Belstone, near Okehampton. The theme was 'The Divine Purpose of the Institution of the Church'. In an address Wallis gave he acknowledged the influence of both the Brethren and

<sup>22</sup>Perrins was to lead an independent fellowship in Cardiff, but his influence was greater at the level of helping to shape an understanding of eschatology for the HCM. He was for many years the editor of the magazine *Fulness* throughout virtually the whole decade of the 70s; later he co-edited (with John MacLauchlan) a broadsheet entitled *Proclaim* (early-mid 80s); and then produced a bimonthly paper entitled *Prophetic Bulletin* (Sept. 89 - Feb. 93). In these three publications can be seen the emphasis that Perrins brought to the HCM; that emphasis was primarily a strong belief that the church is called to be 'prophetic' and has a vital role to play in bringing the Day of the Lord ever closer. Although there is not an over-abundance of direct teaching on eschatology there is a considerable amount that is indirect.

<sup>23</sup>Forster leads the work known as *Ichthus Christian Fellowship* and although this network of churches is excluded from Walker's definition of Restoration (*Restoring*, 37f.), Forster has always been a major influencer on the HCM. His theological training has been recognised and he has been a contributor to conferences that have helped shape the HCM. In recent years through March for Jesus he has had greater access to some of the HCM networks, perhaps particularly that of Gerald Coates and Pioneer.

the Pentecostals churches. The former had influenced their view of church and the latter had shown the need for the Spirit's power. However he closed this section of his talk on Brethrenism and Pentecostalism quoting the words of another, 'There is more truth yet to break forth out of God's Holy Word', thus strongly implying that they were expecting something that would exceed both of those movements. It was also in the same address at this conference that we see the extent of Lillie's influence on his own desire for, and perspectives on effective revival. He stated that the effects of the revival that had taken place in the Hebrides had largely disappeared through 'ecclesiasticism'.<sup>24</sup> A third conference was held at Mamhead Park, near Exeter in September 1962. Again the numbers had grown, this time to around seventy people. New people attended, perhaps the most significant new name being Bryn Jones, who would prove to be very influential in the later HCM.<sup>25</sup>

Towards the end of this period charismatic issues were increasingly coming to the fore but it is clear from the agenda of these particular conferences that ecclesiology, and not simply charismatic experience,

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<sup>24</sup>The substance of Wallis' address can be found in Wallis, *Arthur*, 138-140.

<sup>25</sup>These conferences are covered in greater detail in Peter Hocken's book *Streams of Renewal* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), 30-37, and in Jonathan Wallis, *Arthur*, 126-140. There was another major conference attended by around 100 people held at Herne Bay Court, Kent in April 1965. It was entitled 'The Apostolic Commission: The Message, The Men and The Methods' (see Wallis, *ibid.*, 184-185).

was the major feature of the early HCM. The conference reports that were released after the respective conferences make it abundantly clear that a vision for a restored church was the main focus. Wallis and Lillie wrote following the Belstone conference of 1961 that:

It was our conviction that such a church must arise in this end time, endued with power from on high, equipped with the manifold gifts of the Spirit, and with a much fuller understanding of her proper function and purpose in the divine plan.<sup>26</sup>

Again in the report from the third conference, held at Mamhead in 1962, they summarised the three conferences, saying that, 'in each of these (conferences) some aspects of the teaching of the New Testament concerning the church and its functions has been the theme, with an emphasis on a whole-hearted return to apostolic Christianity.'<sup>27</sup>

Commenting on Belstone they emphasised that a number who attended the conference had experienced 'a real anointing of the Spirit' causing a desire for 'instruction in and experience of the ministry of the Holy Spirit', but the overall emphasis of the conferences is summarised in the perspective that there was, 'every

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<sup>26</sup>*The Divine Purpose in the Institution of the Church*, Conference report (private publication, undated), 3.

<sup>27</sup>Mamhead report, 3.

evidence that “the wheels of God”, moving slowly yet surely the wide world over, are bring us ever nearer to a full and glorious restoration of God's full thought for His church in preparation for Christ's return.<sup>28</sup>

The ecclesiology they were seeking to present was essentially that of a church modelled according to the New Testament. In many ways this was a development of the view that the Brethren churches had espoused for many years, and as will be seen, the centrality of this ecclesiology is important to grasp for it was this emphasis that would eventually lead to a re-examination of eschatology.<sup>29</sup> Indeed it is the distinctive ecclesiology

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28Quotes are from the Introduction (written by Wallis and Lillie) to the report of the conference, *The Present Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, (private publication), 3.

29The Plymouth Brethren held to a ‘gathered’ church ecclesiology. The church consisted only of those who were ‘true’ followers of Christ and in that light they practised believers’baptism. They advocated a simplicity of church structure, appealing directly to the witness of the New Testament. To a large measure there was a rejection of, what they saw as, unnecessary structures; this included a negative stance toward ordination and denominational allegiance, and (at least in theory) the opportunity for all to share in ministry. (In practice this interpretation of ‘the priesthood of all believers’ meant the priesthood of all male believers.) Brethren ecclesiology was the biggest influence on early HCM structure. However, as far as eschatology was concerned, it was the conviction that the Spirit was being outpoured (as evidenced in the charismatic renewal) for a last days restoration of the church, not simply to New Testament pattern, but to New Testament power, that was to eventually overthrow the pessimism of the Brethren eschatology. For a discussion on the ecclesiology of the HCM see Turner,

that separates the HCM from the wider renewal movement of the same era. Lillie expressed the differences as follows:

“Renewal” is ‘revival’ with an emphasis on the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. Renewalists have no quarrel with denominations as such; in fact their fervent hope has been to see renewal spreading throughout the denominational churches. “Restorationists”, however, recognise the importance of identifying the “true” church as distinct from the “nominal” church. For them, “renewal” must address the whole question of structure and ministries of local churches. Inevitably this is seen to invalidate the whole concept of diverse, and often competing, denominationalism.<sup>30</sup>

Although a reading of the reports from those conferences clearly shows how the ecclesiology was driving the eschatology, there was a specific address given by Roger Forster on eschatology at Mamhead in 1962 under the title of ‘Bring Back the King’. Forster maintained that the first generation of Christians could have seen the return of the Lord, ‘had that generation of believers fulfilled the Lord’s commission and stood for all that it means to be the “Body of Christ”, and had preached the gospel in all the world.’<sup>31</sup>

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‘Ecclesiology in the Major ‘Apostolic’ Restorationist Churches in the United Kingdom’, *Vox Evangelica*, Vol. XIX, (1989).

<sup>30</sup>Lillie, *Restoration*, 19.

<sup>31</sup>Mamhead report, 32.

That generation had failed and the challenge is ever-present for every subsequent generation; Forster stated that God was,

waiting for just one remnant generation of the church to fulfil by His Spirit His prophetic programme, in the light of which the church is not to sit back and say complacently, “the Lord is coming”, but rather to stand and declare His triumph and be corporately that generation... through which He can fulfil His prophetic programme.<sup>32</sup>

This address was certainly most significant and it was to these words of Forster that Wallis and Lillie referred when they invited delegates to the further conference in 1965 at Herne Bay Court.<sup>33</sup> It was also the beginning of a turning point for some, who would later have significant roles within HCM, in their thinking on eschatology.<sup>34</sup>

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32Ibid., p. 33. In the margin of the particular conference report that I have, someone has written in pen ‘How about Laodicea’ thus indicating the conflict between Forster’s presentation and the predominant Dispensationalist eschatology.

33See Wallis, *Arthur*, 183.

34In an interview with Peter Lyne on 9th January 1995, he stated that Forster’s talk was given to him by Hugh Thompson and he reflected that it was this talk that gave him a framework within which to think; a colleague of Graham Perrins also confirmed Perrins’ direct acknowledgement of Forster’s talk on him. (Lyne, Thompson and Perrins were among the five original people that Wallis called together in 1972 to discuss eschatology.)

As the HCM developed issues such as apostolic ministry<sup>35</sup> came much more in focus but the essential vision for a restored church did not change, it was simply that other means of fulfilling that vision were added to the beliefs and practices. The theme of a restored church that was structured along the (perceived) simplicity of the New Testament and was empowered by the Spirit to fulfil its commission to preach the Gospel to the whole world was inevitably going to clash with the predominant Dispensationalist eschatology. It is to the eschatological implications that we now turn our attention.

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35Apostolic ministry was raised as a major factor as early as the conference at Belstone in 1961 by Cousens. He maintained that God had ordained that through apostolic ministry (basing his talk on Ephesians 4:11-15) the church would come to maturity. He said that 'God has ordained that He will have "a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing", and this is the Bible way by which it shall be accomplished' (Belstone report, 51). His background in the Apostolic church as well as his involvement with the Latter Rain movement would be the main influences on his teaching on this issue.



## Chapter 2

# HCM Ecclesiology: the Implications for the Eschatology

### HCM Eschatology by 1972

1972 is an important date in the development of the HCM, indeed Hocken's assessment is that the 'real beginnings of the house-church movement as a coherent force in Britain are rooted in a meeting convened by Arthur Wallis that met in February 1972.'<sup>1</sup> Prior to this conference Perrins had been meeting regularly with Thompson and Forster to discuss, amidst other subjects, eschatology and it was Wallis' intention that the study and discussion that they had been engaged in should now benefit a wider group.<sup>2</sup> Thompson has indicated that the two main issues that this small group came to agree on was the emphasis that every generation could be the final generation that fulfilled the purposes of God and that this fulfilment was tied to the maturity of Christ within the church.<sup>3</sup>

It is not easy to determine how developed the eschatological understanding was among the wider group of ministries involved in the HCM when Wallis

1 Peter Hocken, *Renewal*, No. 226, 'The Prophetic Ministry of Graham Perrins', 37.

2 Ibid.

3 Thompson, interview on 10/11/94.

called together five other men.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the discussion was open suggests that the eschatology was still in process of development, although both Ian Farr and Tony Pullin have stated that the eschatology was clear by 1970 or so.<sup>5</sup> This leads us to accept that there was at least core agreement on the restoration of the church being (the) key to the return of Christ, but beyond that central theme there was a measure of uncertainty. As already noted the address given by Forster on 'Bring back the King' in 1962 had been a key

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- 4 Although a number of those who were involved in the conferences mentioned were clearly thinking through the issues of eschatology it was not until 1972 that Wallis called together five other men to discuss the issue of eschatology; see Wallis, *Arthur*, 198f. The five called together in 1972 were Bryn Jones, Peter Lyne, David Mansell, Graham Perrins and Hugh Thompson. This group continued to meet and invited John Noble to join them. In later years that group was jokingly called the 'magnificent seven'. The group of seven doubled in size through the invitation of another seven men to join them. These further seven were George Tarleton, Gerald Coates, Barney Coombs, Maurice Smith, Ian McCulloch, John MacLauchlan and Campbell McAlpine. It was these fourteen (again they had a humorous name the 'fabulous fourteen') that, in the main, shaped up the now rapidly developing HCM.
- 5 Pullin became involved with Thompson in Bristol in the early 1970s and was exposed to Perrins at a similar period of time. He maintained that the eschatology was clear by then - but that probably indicates that Perrins and Thompson were relatively clear (interview on 7th. January 1995). Farr was involved with John MacLauchlan from 1971. According to Farr both MacLauchlan and Perrins became the dominant voices on eschatology and the destiny of the church in the meetings that followed on from the initial calling together in 1972 by Wallis (interview on 10th. August 1994).

and in 1965 at the conference held at Herne Bay Court, Perrins taught that the church was to provoke the Jews to jealousy through demonstrating that it was now the covenant-people of God.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is safe to conclude that by 1972 there was some clarity on eschatology, it was essentially the vision of a restored church that was the overriding factor in developing a HCM eschatology, as evidenced by the earlier Wallis / Lillie conferences. In examining the dominant eschatology that was embraced by the majority of the evangelical church (and, by clear implication, of those who attended those early conferences) in the early-to-mid twentieth century, it will soon become evident that the ecclesiology being advocated by the HCM meant that a new eschatological framework would have to be found.<sup>7</sup>

## **Eschatology prior to Dispensationalism**

In keeping with the optimism of the day post-millennialism was the dominant belief in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The historical process (and progress) was subject to divine sovereignty and was leading toward the golden age of the millennium.

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6 This was acknowledged in an interview with Hugh Thompson on 10th. November.

7 Although the purpose of the 1972 meeting was to discuss eschatology very soon the dominant theme was that of the restoration of the apostolic and prophetic ministries. This theme would take up a central focus within the teachings of the HCM throughout the ensuing years and again illustrates that the driving force of the HCM eschatology has been the nature of the church rather than end-time events as such.

Bebbington summarises the prevalent view with the statement that, 'The millennium would be the result of gradual improvement - a belief that shaded into the idea of progress.'<sup>8</sup> Indeed such was the belief in the progress of Christian civilisation that a belief in the personal return of Christ was not an essential part of evangelical belief, so much so, that Charles Simeon in 1830 assured a correspondent that it was a matter with which he had not the slightest concern.<sup>9</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed the post-millennialism of earlier days began to be challenged, partly through pessimism, but also because of a resurgent belief in the imminent return of Christ.<sup>10</sup> A series of conferences, held over a five year period, commencing in 1825 at Albury Court, Surrey helped bring the pre-millennial interpretation into focus in the UK.<sup>11</sup> Such was the growing interest in prophecy that by 1855 it was suggested that the majority of the evangelical clergy were pre-millennial.<sup>12</sup> This pre-

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8 D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, a History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 62.

9 Bebbington, *ibid.*, 83.

10 Bebbington, *ibid.*, 83.

11 D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel* (Sheffield: SAP, 1996), 93.

12 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 85, quoting *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, vol. 4, no. 14 (1855), 698. Although this figure was not the result of a survey and therefore its accuracy cannot be guaranteed it nevertheless shows that pre-millennialist schools of thought were beginning to gain the ascendancy from the latter part of the nineteenth century.

millennial school however was split between those who took a 'historicist' viewpoint and those who adopted a 'futurist'

viewpoint.<sup>13</sup> It is to a specific futurist interpretation, called Dispensationalism, that we now must turn our attention.

## **The Rise of Dispensationalism**

The exact historical roots of Dispensationalism have been debated<sup>14</sup> but the systemisation and popularisation of it was the work of the Brethren church leader, J. N.

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<sup>13</sup>The historicist school (as propounded at the Albury conferences) was the dominant of the two in the mid-nineteenth century. This school held that the prophecies in Daniel and the visions in Revelation could be matched with remarkable historical events. This normally led to an interpretation that the days spoken of in those books were simply figurative ways of speaking of years (hence the 1260 days that John wrote of in Revelation was interpreted as 1260 years of history). A number of those who adopted this approach had worked out that the millennium would begin sometime in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The futurist school held that the book of Revelation did not depict the course of history but describes events yet to take place in the future.

<sup>14</sup>Faupel, *Everlasting*, 96, makes a case for the influence of Francisco Ribera and his 500 page commentary on Revelation (published 1590) as laying the ground for the futurist interpretation. In his commentary he assigned the first three chapters to John's own day, with the remaining chapters to be fulfilled in the final 3 1/2 years of the church age. Although the source of Dispensationalism continues to be debated, a date around 1830 is generally accepted as its origins proper.

Darby. He was involved as a leading speaker in a series of conferences for the study of prophecy, held at Powerscourt, Ireland, beginning in 1831, where he consistently elaborated the view that the predictions in the Book of Revelation would be fulfilled after believers had been raptured from the earth. He thereby divided the second coming into two parts: a secret coming for his saints that removed them to heaven, and a public coming with his saints to reign on earth after the period of great distress had taken place during the prior absence of the believers. Bebbington states of Darby's Dispensationalism that:

it gradually became the most popular version of futurism. In the nineteenth century it remained a minority view among pre-millennialists, but this intense form of apocalyptic expectation was to achieve much greater salience in the twentieth.<sup>15</sup>

By the 1920s post-millennialism had gone into serious decline in the light of the historical realities that progress had not produced a golden age, and it was Dispensationalism that captured the minds of many evangelicals,<sup>16</sup> being greatly helped through the publication of the Scofield Bible in 1909.<sup>17</sup>

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15Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 86.

16The historicist viewpoint had become discredited mainly through the failure of the dates that had been set for the return of Christ to materialise.

17Prior to the publication of the Scofield Bible, Dispensationalism had made a significant impact during the latter half of the 19th century through the publication of a

## ***The Eschatology of the Plymouth Brethren and Pentecostal Churches***

Many evangelicals were convinced over the rightness of Dispensationalism, no more so than the Brethren movement, particularly as many of the original teachers of Dispensationalism came from Brethren quarters.

Most branches of Pentecostalism have pre-millennialism as one of their tenets and the pre-millennialism that is normally taught is Dispensationalism, indeed 'most Pentecostals when tracing their roots readily acknowledge that they are indebted to Darby's dispensationalism'.<sup>18</sup> Although later Dispensationalism normally taught that the gifts of the Spirit had died out with the close of the Apostolic era,<sup>19</sup> Pentecostals have successfully adopted the Dispensationalist framework on eschatology but have dropped the common Dispensationalist understanding of the gifts. D. J. Wilson in his article, 'Pentecostal Perspectives on Eschatology', states that,

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monthly periodical, *The Prophetic Times*, and a series of annual conferences in North America, the Niagara Bible Conference, that were held from 1875 to 1900. The influential evangelist, D.L. Moody, adopted Darby's views in 1877. (Faupel, *Everlasting*, 99.)

18Faupel, *ibid.*, 103.

19At the Powercourt conferences Darby convinced the participants that the gifts of the Spirit functioned to establish the church and then had been withdrawn. The outbreak of gifts through the Catholic Apostolic Church of Irving, Darby maintained, were spurious. (See Faupel, *Everlasting*, 97; H. H. Rowden, *The Origins of the Brethren: 1825-1850*, London: Pickering & Inglis, 1967, 86-88.)

Most Pentecostals have followed the prevailing view of the late-nineteenth-century prophetic conference movement, expecting the rapture, or removal, of the church prior to a time of tribulation.

He also notes the impact of the Scofield Bible, stating that, 'The Scofield Reference Bible became the source of Dispensationalism that has dominated Pentecostalism.'<sup>20</sup>

Dayton, suggests that many Pentecostals, while embracing Darby's eschatology, held to three dispensations whereas Darby held to seven. These Pentecostals relating the three dispensations to the Trinity. Thus both the early and modern church belonged to the same dispensation, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Through making this adjustment to Darby's teaching they maintained that the gifts of the Spirit had not ceased.

The early Pentecostals had an intense sense of the imminence of the end of the world; the outpouring of the Spirit and the gift of tongues could only mean one thing for them: 'they were living in the age of the Spirit before the final day of glory when Christ would return to make all things new.'<sup>22</sup> The pre-millennialism was never

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20This article appears in Stanley Burgess and Gary McGee (eds.), *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, (Grand rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 264-268.

21D. W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, 1987), 145, 150-152.

22Land 'A Passion for the Kingdom' *JPT* 1 (October 1992), 25. See also the comments by Cox, *Fire*: particularly the early



challenged as there was no expectation of redemption extending beyond the 'spiritual' dimension; the vision was one of 'saving souls' for, as a Pentecostal graduate student remarked, 'Social concern may feed the hungry and clothe people but when the trumpet sounds and nobody rises what do you have?'<sup>23</sup> Although the intense expectation of the return of Christ might have waned somewhat in Pentecostal circles, since the days of the Azusa Street Mission, the emphasis continues. In 1989 the editorial of *Mountain Movers*, the world mission magazine of the Assemblies of God (USA) stated that,

The Bible clearly warns that believers will not make this world better. The world will only grow steadily worse until Jesus returns to take His followers out it... [T]he church is destined to lose the war against human suffering in this age... Christ did not ask His followers to renovate this place. This place is condemned. Jesus raised up His disciples to pluck men and women out of this world and set them on the path that leads to a heavenly home.<sup>24</sup>

Bebbington rightly points out that the group of independent evangelicals who were involved in the

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chapters where he outlines the elements that came together in the Azusa Street revival and the ensuing early Pentecostal movement.

<sup>23</sup>Murray Dempster 'Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective', *JPT* 2 April 1993), 54, quoting one of his own graduate students.

<sup>24</sup>Editorial, 'Sidetracked!' in March 1989 *Mountain Movers*. Quoted in Dempster, 'Social Concern', 60.

conferences hosted by Wallis and Lillie were in fact 'mostly Brethren in background'.<sup>25</sup> There were also a few present who were from Pentecostal backgrounds or who had recently been baptised in the Spirit but it is highly unlikely that any of them held views on eschatology that significantly differed from the prevailing Dispensationalism. Wallis himself acknowledges that he had been 'in great faith for things to wax worse and worse.'<sup>26</sup> So although eschatology was not the dominant theme in those early conferences it is safe to assume that virtually all of those involved held to a pre-millennial viewpoint, with most probably veering toward some form of Dispensationalist viewpoint.<sup>27</sup> Further, the experience of Spirit-baptism did not necessitate a shift from a Dispensational framework. That experience could have been interpreted along the lines of an empowerment for mission, as per mainstream Pentecostalism; it was rather the striving toward a corporate renewal of the church that would be the factor that dictated a rejection of the eschatology that dominated the participants at those conferences.

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25Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 230.

26David Matthew (ed.), *Arthur Wallis: from the prophet's pen* (Bradford: Harvestime), 7.

27This view was being challenged by such people as Forster and Perrins but there is no clear and consistent line being taught in those early conferences. Wallis also suggested during the discussions following Lillie's address on the Church and Kingdom at Belstone (1961 conference) that there were areas of Scofield's Bible that needed to be avoided, specifically when the kingdom is described simply in Messianic and Jewish terms. (This discussion is described briefly in the conference report, 17f.)

## The rejection of the ‘secret rapture’ teaching

Although the teaching given at those early conferences was embryonic as far as the later and more developed HCM was concerned, it is already evident that any further development of the vision of a restored church would eventually lead to a total rejection of ‘the doom and gloom’ view that the church would never be successful in this age, but was to hold on until Christ raptured it from the evil world. In short the developing ecclesiology was inconsistent with any eschatology of defeat. The vision of a restored church, modelled on the pattern of the New Testament church, and endued with the power of the Spirit simply meant that some new eschatological framework would have to be found.

The developing ecclesiology demanded that a more optimistic eschatology would need to be embraced but there were also other direct influences that pushed the HCM toward a distinctive eschatology. Indeed ecclesiology and eschatology are intrinsically linked, each mutually influencing, correcting and directing the other. John Colwell in an article on Anabaptism makes the poignant statement, in part directed toward the ‘so-called restoration churches’, that,

The manner by which eschatology determines ecclesiology is rarely recognised, even by those who to some degree would consider themselves to be the spiritual heirs of the early Anabaptists.<sup>28</sup>

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28Colwell, John E., ‘A Radical Church? A Reappraisal of Anabaptist Ecclesiology’, *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 38 (1987),

Although the early HCM was concerned with the restored church this vision was further fuelled and confirmed by the developing eschatology. It is therefore now appropriate that an examination of the key influences on the eschatology is examined. There are two notable human influences (G.H. Lang and the Latter Rain Movement) that give shape to the teaching on eschatology up to the mid 1970s. These will be looked at first in order that the developing shape of HCM eschatology can be seen. Other influences do come in later and in due course they too need to be examined.

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119-142; (quote from p. 140).

## Chapter 3

### The Influences that shaped HCM Eschatology

#### G.H. Lang (1874-1958)

Lang was an independent and radical thinker who was an influence on a number of those who were to be involved in the early HCM. He exerted a very significant influence on Wallis during the early formative years and Wallis 'would visit his Wimbourne home as frequently as he could', so much so that 'in many ways he (Wallis) became his disciple, and received a great deal of helpful and wise counsel'<sup>1</sup> from Lang. In private conversation other individuals have also acknowledged the debt they owed to Lang, some of that debt being in their understanding of eschatology.<sup>2</sup> Perrins, who was to become one of the clearer HCM voices on eschatology, was one such individual who was deeply impacted through visiting Lang in May 1958 and some of his early understanding of the subject was gained from Lang and his writings.<sup>3</sup>

Lang's use of the Bible in developing his teaching on

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1 Wallis, *Arthur*, 58.

2 This certainly includes Noble and Thompson, from the early HCM, but probably also a number of others, and through them the influence of Lang extended indirectly to others.

3 Hocken, 'Prophetic Ministry', 36.

prophecy shows a literalistic approach without sufficient consideration being given to the effect the 'Christ Event' has on biblical interpretation; on this matter he did not differ greatly from teachers of Dispensationalism.<sup>4</sup> However, although he moved within Brethren circles, he rejected the prevalent (Brethren) teaching of a secret rapture that removed the whole church prior to the tribulation. He placed a great emphasis on the necessity of holiness and therefore only those who were 'counted worthy' would participate in the 'first resurrection'.<sup>5</sup> Bruce describes Lang's view as 'selective resurrection and rapture'.<sup>6</sup> The later HCM did not endorse this view, as it stands, but the teaching that Lang proposed can be

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4 Lang suggests that numerous nations not mentioned in biblical prophecy (in this he includes 'the Americas, north Europe and Russia') might have already been destroyed before the end, perhaps through atomic warfare, simply on the basis that he finds no reference to them in the Bible! (See *Coming Events*, private publication, 1949, p. 14.) It seems that he understood the prophetic writings as all being future and literal: again similar to Dispensationalist teachers.

5 Lang quoted two texts in support of his view: Luke 20:35 concerning 'those who are counted *worthy* of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead'; and also Philippians 3:11 concerning Paul's desire to 'attain to the resurrection from the dead'. This latter verse, he maintained, indicated that Paul lived a measure of uncertainty over the possibility of his own experience of this event. Lang made much of Paul's use of the word *exanastasis* in this verse stating that this was not the general resurrection but the 'first resurrection' that only those who overcame would experience (see *Firstfruits and Harvest*, p. 12 and *The First Resurrection*, p. 8; both Walsham-le-Willows: Private Publications).

6 Bruce, *In Retrospect*, 118.

shown to be an effective framework that influenced HCM thinking.

Lang produced many booklets and alongside his commentaries on Daniel and Revelation his two booklets, *Firstfruits and Harvest and Coming Events: An Outline of Bible Prophecy*<sup>7</sup> are probably the clearest outline of his teaching on eschatology. Using these two booklets it is possible to draw out the salient points of his teaching as far as the impact it would have on the HCM. To simplify matters somewhat it will only be necessary to look at his specific teaching under two headings: two headings that he personally used and have also been used within the HCM.

### ***Firstfruits and harvest***

Lang taught a rapture for 'the watchful', for those who were mature in Christ before the end and preceding what he understood to be a period of intense persecution.<sup>8</sup> He maintained that there was a principle in Scripture that grain is reaped as soon as it is ripe and, in line with the Old Testament pattern of the feast of firstfruits when an early sheaf was presented to God as a sign of the coming harvest, so the watchful would be 'reaped' for God before the final harvest as a firstfruit offering ahead of the main harvest. The rest of the 'grain' would then ripen through the intense heat of the

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7 They were privately published in 1940 (with a second edition in 1946) and 1949 respectively.

8 This view is not unique to him, Lang himself quotes Hudson Taylor as teaching the exact same view of a partial rapture; see *Firstfruits and Harvest*, 28f.

summer (this heat he equated with the great tribulation). He saw this pattern particularly in Revelation 14 where the firstfruits appear with Christ on Mount Zion first and only later is there a harvesting of the earth. For Lang the firstfruits are described as the people who, 'were already pure, ripened by the earlier discipline of life; and not needing for this purpose the greater heat of the Tribulation the great, they were removed before it set in.'<sup>9</sup>

Two quotes from Lang will suffice to summarise his teaching; he states that: 'One section of the family escapes the End-Times by being rapt to heaven, and the rest, the more numerous portion, as the term indicates, go into the Great Tribulation';<sup>10</sup> and again that, 'Firstfruits and harvest were grown from one sowing in one field, only they were reaped in two portions.'<sup>11</sup>

### ***The Manchild***

Lang could not accept that the manchild that is given birth to in Revelation 12 was Christ because the picture described was not accurate to Jesus' experience (he pointed out for example that unlike the manchild Christ was not immediately caught up to the throne upon birth). This manchild could only be part of the family of the church for the woman is said to have other children.<sup>12</sup>

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9 *Events*, 20.

10 *Firstfruits*, 42.

11 *Firstfruits*, 44.

12 *Firstfruits*, 42.



He saw the exact same pattern of firstfruits and harvest in the description of the birth of this manchild. This manchild was simply a portion of the church's family that would be caught up to the throne of God prior to the *parousia*. This victorious portion of the church would cause Satan to be cast down, resulting in severe tribulation against the rest of the church; this tribulation would then ripen the rest of the harvest which would be reaped at the close of this age.

### ***Summary of Lang's contribution***

Lang gave to the HCM the framework of a portion of the church reaching maturity ahead of the rest of the body. This maturity would be the key to the over-throw of Satan, the escalation of tribulation, and the catalyst for the final harvest. He pointed people away from the concept of the *parousia* as a day that was arbitrarily set in God's celestial calendar when Christ would suddenly return; for Lang it was 'ripeness, not the calendar or the clock, that determined the time of reaping'.<sup>13</sup> The key elements, then, in Lang that contributed toward the HCM eschatology is that of the necessity of the maturity of a (firstfruit) portion of the church as the catalyst for the release of God's purpose in the end-time.

### **The 'Latter Rain' movement**

The New Order of the Latter Rain, commonly known as The Latter Rain Movement,<sup>14</sup> was catalysed, in part, by

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<sup>13</sup>*Firstfruits*, 44.

<sup>14</sup>I will use the abbreviation LRM from now on to refer to the Latter Rain Movement.

the campaigns of healing-evangelist William Branham when he visited Vancouver, B.C., Canada in 1947.<sup>15</sup> Teachers from Sharon Bible School in North Battleford, Saskatchewan were present and his demonstration of healing and 'words of knowledge' made a deep impression upon them. George Hawtin, the director of the Bible school, was one who attended those meetings and he wrote in the January 1, 1948 edition of the *Sharon Star*:

In Vancouver... the deaf received their hearing. I heard the dumb speak... I saw a goiter [sic] vanish... to my best knowledge, I did not see one person who was not healed when Brother Branham took time to pray specially for him... All great outpourings of the past have had their outstanding truths. Luther's truth was justification by faith; Wesley's was sanctification; the Baptists taught the pre-millennial coming of Christ; the missionary alliance taught divine healing; the Pentecostal outpouring has restored the baptism of the Holy Spirit to its rightful place. But, the next great

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<sup>15</sup>Branham's visit to Vancouver was undoubtedly the catalyst for the LRM, but there was also another prior influence in the publication by Franklin Hall in 1946 of *Atomic Power with God through Fasting and Prayer*. Hall was convinced that the church was on the brink of a great revival, and that from this revival would emerge a victorious church, which would include 'overcomers' who would attain immortality. Hall held a number of extreme views such as believing the army in Joel 2:3-11 was the victorious church that was literally 'gravity freed' so that 'great people will run up walls'. (Material on Hall in *Blessing the Church?*, Guildford: Eagle, 1995, 65f.)

outpouring is going to be marked by all these other truths, plus such a demonstration of the nine gifts of the Spirit as the world, not even the apostolic world, has ever witnessed before. This revival will be short and will be the last before the Rapture of the Church.<sup>16</sup>

The result was that in February 1948 there was a dramatic experience of the Spirit that broke out in the Bible school. In July 1948 a huge camp meeting was put on which attracted several thousand from the United States, Canada and beyond, all seeking to become part of what was often termed the 'New Thing'.<sup>17</sup> Within a short space of time similar phenomena spread to a number of churches and centres across North America.<sup>18</sup> These common phenomena and beliefs became known as the LRM. In some ways it was a return to the spontaneity of the early Pentecostal movement but it caused a great deal of controversy within established Pentecostal circles as it brought some new emphases. The restoration of the 'fivefold ministry' (with a particular appeal to Ephesians 4:11), especially apostles and prophets, as they were essential to bring the church to unity was one such

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16Quoted in Richard M. Riss, *Latter Rain* (Ontario: Honeycomb Visual Productions, 1987).

17Isaiah 43:18,19 became a key Scripture for the movement. Isaiah declared that God was about to do a 'new thing' and this was taken by those within the LRM as applying to them and their situation.

18Riss, Richard 'The Latter Rain Movement of 1948' in *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 4, (Spring 1982), 34, 38.

emphasis; alongside this emphasis there was a large resurgence of 'personal prophecy' and the practise of the 'prophetic presbytery';<sup>19</sup> but it is as the movement developed that a unique contribution was made in the realm of eschatology. The Pentecostal movement had primarily adopted the Dispensationalist framework of Darby and Scofield, but the LRM spoke of a victorious church and a world-wide revival: indeed by those within the movement their experience of the Spirit was seen as the beginnings of that revival.<sup>20</sup> The imminent pre-millennial return of Christ was stressed which would be preceded by an outpouring of the Spirit. The words of Joel 2:23 about 'former' and 'latter rain' were understood as a dual prophecy: the former rain being the outpouring on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the 'latter rain' being descriptive of an outpouring that would immediately precede the *parousia*.<sup>21</sup> In Palestine the

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19Based on an interpretation of 1 Tim. 4:14, the prophetic presbytery was the practise of calling together two or more prophets who would then choose out individuals and prophesy over them. Such a practise is described by Bill Hamon in *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image), 54-57; with a record of prophecy that he received in a LRM prophetic presbytery context in 1953 on p. 63. Hamon's books clearly reflect a LRM understanding of a restored church.

20However the early Pentecostal theology bore a great resemblance to that of the LRM as will be noted later. William Faupel in *The Everlasting Gospel*, gives a number of quotes from the very early Pentecostal era (pre-1915) that make the same points and exclusive claims that were later to be made by LRM writers (see Appendix 1 of this thesis).

21Riss, *Pneuma* 4, 35.

latter (harvest) rains were more intense than the early rains and so the LRM expected this outpouring of the Spirit to be even greater than the former rains of Acts 2. This final outpouring of the Spirit upon the church would,

finally bring the fullness, a company of overcoming Sons of God who have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ to actually dethrone Satan, casting him out of the heavenlies, and finally binding him in the earthlies, bringing the hope of deliverance and life to all the families of the earth.<sup>22</sup>

A common term used within the LRM was 'the manifest sons of God' which they took from Romans 8:18-23. For the LRM the manifestation of the sons of God would not take place at the resurrection / *parousia* but during this present age. Indeed as the church (or at least a portion of the church) comes into a full experience of sonship a redemptive chain reaction will take place throughout all creation.

Bill Hamon who was influenced by and recognised as a prophet through the LRM,<sup>23</sup> effectively summarises the teaching of the LRM in a contemporary setting with specific recognition of the restoration of the apostolic

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<sup>22</sup>The quote is from J. Preston Eby, *The Battle of Armageddon Part IV*, Kingdom Bible Studies, September 1976, and is recorded in Richard Riss' article, 'Latter Rain Movement' in *The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988).

<sup>23</sup>He recounts his appointment as a prophet in his book *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*, 4-7, 62-63.

ministry in the following words:

The Company of Prophets will prepare the way for the office of the apostle which will take place in the 1990s.

The restoration of the apostle to full recognition and authority will bring the Church to maturity, unity, and proper church structure. Signs and wonders will be wrought which will cause the world to look to the Church for answers and miracles needed. Whole nations will turn to God. The Church will become glorious and victorious and cause the glory of the Lord to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. When all five-fold ministries are fully restored... and the Church is unified and perfected, then Jesus can return and set up His Kingdom and establish His eternal reign with His Bride/Church.<sup>24</sup>

The influence of the LRM has often been underestimated. Hollenweger all but dismisses it, simply stating that it was 'an enthusiastic wing of existing Pentecostal organisations', and that 'in various places it has become independent and is now in competition with existing, more traditional Pentecostal denominations.'<sup>25</sup> Likewise Walker does not see the LRM having much bearing on the HCM and looks elsewhere for influences

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<sup>24</sup>Hamon, 'God's Wave of Restoration for the 1980s', *Thy Kingdom Come* (August 1987), 11; quoted by House & Ice in *Dominion Theology* (Portland: Multnomah, 1988), 393.

<sup>25</sup>*The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1969), 72., but cf. pp. 140-148.

on Wallis and the HCM.<sup>26</sup> However, the LRM does seem to have had a greater influence on the wider charismatic scene (and on the HCM) than has been acknowledged by many. Riss states that ‘there was a significant extent to which they [the doctrines and practices of the LRM] were received outside of the major Pentecostal denominations’ and that ‘many of those involved in the Latter Rain carried on and developed principles that had arisen in the late 1940s, becoming a vital part of the charismatic renewal in the 1960s and 1970s.’<sup>27</sup> He suggests that at least nineteen ministries brought LRM beliefs into the Charismatic Movement<sup>28</sup> and cites *Logos Journal*, Bill Britton and John Poole as three key influences on the charismatic renewal that had their roots within the LRM.<sup>29</sup>

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26Walker, *Restoring*, 134, states that, ‘There was a latter rain movement in American Pentecostalism in the late 1950s, which no doubt influenced Arthur Wallis’. Beyond that he makes no significant connection to the Latter Rain movement, seeing a stronger connection to the Apostolic Pentecostal church (249-253). Although he is right to see the influence of the Apostolics he has, I believe, wrongly underestimated the influence of the Latter Rain movement.

27Riss, *Dictionary*, 533f.

28Riss, *Pneuma*, 44.

29Riss, *Dictionary*, 534 and *Pneuma*, 42-44. *Logos Journal* was a journal published by the very influential charismatic publishing house Logos International Fellowship, inc. It was originally a Latter Rain publication called *Herald of Faith* (later changing its name to *Harvest Time*). The impact of Bill Britton will be picked up separately as he is of great significance, not only for the wider Charismatic Movement, but specifically in relationship to the HCM. John Poole was an influential pastor

Harvey Cox, writing on the North American Pentecostal / Charismatic scene of the early 1990s and the increasing involvement in the political scene of Charismatic leaders such as Pat Robertson, asked 'how so many pentecostals, whose battle-cry for years was the imminent return of Christ, could have fallen in love with dominion theology', seeks an answer from 'historians of the movement'. He states:

These historians believe that the turning point came with the "Latter Rain movement" of the 1950s... They quietly set aside the idea that Jesus would return soon which, according to one of Latter Rain's leader's George Hawkin, may once have "served a useful purpose" but that was really a "false hope".

Cox then goes on to quote Hawkin directly as follows: 'We are entering into the Kingdom Age in a sense now, for the Kingdom is being formed in us and when it is completed... all judicial as well as religious authority will be vested in the church of Christ.'<sup>30</sup>

Cox is correct in assessing the eschatological shift of emphasis that was brought in by the LRM. It is in this

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of a church in Philadelphia with whom some of the early HCM had a measure of contact; some contact was direct, some indirect through his writings in such magazines as *New Wine*. His father Fred Poole, who had emigrated from Wales to the USA, had been very active in the Latter Rain movement and had travelled to England with Cousens to spread the Latter Rain message in the early 1950s (see Christine Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana*, Chichester: New Wine Press, 1989, 133-135).

<sup>30</sup>Cox, *Fire*, 293f.



movement that a pessimistic pre-millennialism gave way to a more optimistic and triumphant restorationism. The LRM, as indicated, opened the door to the later dominion theologies of the Charismatic (and politically right) wing of the North American church. And it is again in the sphere of eschatology that the LRM made an impact on the HCM.

The influence of LRM personnel are in evidence at different points in the HCM development. There is the direct influence upon Cousens who experienced the LRM personally, but there was also the indirect contact with the LRM through such influences as noted by Riss (above). Joyce Thurman also notes that in 1966 Bryn Jones met a man by the name of Robert Ewing from Waco, Texas who was part of a church that had come from the LRM.<sup>31</sup> So at different levels the LRM influenced the early HCM, but perhaps no more than through a man by the name of Bill Britton, through his own publications and the re-publication (by Britton) of *The Feast of Tabernacles* by George Warnock. Riss describes this book as 'one of the most influential books arising from within the Latter Rain Movement'.<sup>32</sup>

### **Bill Britton (1918-1985)**

Britton came into contact with the teaching and

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31J.V. Thurman, *New Wineskins, A study of the House Church Movement* (Berne: Verlag Peter Lang, 1982), 25.

32Riss, *Pneuma*, 44. Warnock was one of the Latter Rain teachers and had been Ern Baxter's secretary for two years prior to the Latter Rain movement. Baxter was to become a key figure in the wider Charismatic Movement and in shaping up elements of the HCM eschatology.

influence of the LRM at a national Sunday School conference held by the Assemblies of God in the Spring of 1949. Although the message that 'the end-time revival' had begun was rejected by the Assemblies of God leadership, Britton was convinced and soon was preaching 'the Restoration message'. It was at this stage he began to understand that,

Scripture after scripture (was) testifying to the truths of the One Body of Christ and the sin of denominationalism, the ministry of Apostles and Prophets in the Church today, the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the members of the church, imparted by the laying on of hands with prophecy.<sup>33</sup>

Britton became increasingly convinced about the revelations regarding the 'end-time purposes of God' and during the 1960s began to publish a number of booklets on eschatologically-related themes. His biography usefully charts the development of his thoughts: he firmly rejected a pre-tribulation rapture by 1956;<sup>34</sup> began teaching and seeking to implement a

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33Philip Britton, *Prophet on Wheels - the Life Story of Bill Britton* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1987), 19. This biography is the source for the details of Britton's life. It is amazing to see the close connection between the 'truths' that Britton was embracing and propagating and the HCM understanding. Through Britton's commitment to the Latter Rain teaching he was eventually asked to leave the Assemblies of God for whom he had pastored different churches. The early part of the biography gives many insights into the nature and teaching of the Latter Rain movement.

34P. Britton, *ibid.*, 85f. He began to teach a 'glorious and

plurality of leadership that would be part of the 'end-time' church in 1959;<sup>35</sup> developed a set of messages on 'Jesus as the Pattern Son' in 1960 maintaining that he was not only the example for the church but that the church would grow up into his image and anointing.<sup>36</sup> His son summarised Britton's primary message as proclaiming the maturity of the church before the return of Christ with it reaching to 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' using Ephesians 4:13 as his base-text.<sup>37</sup>

Some quotes from his prolific writings will suitably illustrate his belief in a victorious church prior to the return of Christ:

God is bringing together his body in these last days, and that a body of people, with Christ at their head, being led of the Spirit of God, will walk in victory and power on this earth during a time of the greatest tribulation and persecution against the church ever known in the history of the world.<sup>38</sup>

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triumphant group of overcoming saints... going through the tribulation'.

35Ibid., 106.

36Ibid., 109. These messages were later put together into a booklet entitled 'Jesus the Pattern Son'.

37Ibid., 201. This text was also to become a key text for the HCM.

38Bill Britton, *One Shall be Taken* (private publication, undated but around 1961). In this booklet he also put forward the idea that 'one shall be taken' meant being taken in judgement, rather than the common Pentecostal interpretation of a pre-

[T]he real purposes of God are tied up in that group of saints who press their way to the mark of the High calling of God in Christ Jesus... These are His Witnesses in the earth whom He has anoints without measure. They are the ones who put Satan under their feet, and gain back the inheritance lost by Adam, and much more beyond that.<sup>39</sup>

God will restore His Church till it is without spot or wrinkle, having no blemish... then the world will be evangelized completely with converts that are birthed out of darkness right into the likeness and life of God. So now God is interested in restoring the true Church and the true Ministry, and the evangelizing of the world will come naturally... That which God is bringing forth will be perfect, it will be sinless, deathless, and gloriously victorious! The restoration of this glorious Church, of God's Kingdom to this earth, is what brings back the King!<sup>40</sup>

Britton, however, did not simply believe in a mature church but that a portion of the whole church would reach maturity. They were those who were not simply

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tribulation rapture of the godly. This interpretation was a common one used by HCM teachers which they most certainly obtained from Britton.

39Bill Britton, *Jesus the Pattern Son* (private publication, undated), 7.

40Bill Britton, *Reach for the Stars* (private publication, undated), 68f.

children but mature sons; they were a corporate body and united with Christ, and, because of their unity with Christ, he gave them a variety of names and titles:

Son of Man, Son of God, Christ, Body of Christ, Manchild, Overcomer, God's Army, Stars, Sons of God, a Chosen Generation, His Seed, Zion, the Temple of God, House of God, Abraham's Seed, His Brethren, Living Stones, and many other titles and references. Sometimes they are called by a plural name or title, sometimes by a singular one. For it is a plural body of saints, making up a singular Man with Jesus as the head.<sup>41</sup>

Some within the LRM had developed a teaching of 'sonship' which simply meant that the children of God (through new-birth) could become sons through 'taking their place on the throne of God'<sup>42</sup> and this sonship teaching was taken on board by Britton. He held that it will be these sons that would demonstrate the victory of Jesus in the period immediately preceding the end of this age and that they would then subsequently subdue every aspect of opposition to God's will during the millennium.<sup>43</sup>

Although, at times, it is not exactly clear regarding all the details of what Britton is teaching, it is clear he

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<sup>41</sup>Bill Britton, *Sons of God Awake* (private publication, undated), 83.

<sup>42</sup>Philip Britton, *Prophet*, 50.

<sup>43</sup>Bill Britton, *Unlimited Glory* (private publication, undated), 78-80, 124; Jesus the Pattern Son, 33-47.

maintained that there would be two aspects to the return of Christ. He would first be manifest within his body and later return in Person. It was the manifestation of Christ within the body that he understood Paul to mean by the 'catching up' in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17, i.e. Britton took this to mean a catching up to a higher dimension); he understood that Paul's use of the term 'manifestation of the sons of God' (Romans 8:19) to refer to the same revelation of Jesus within the church.<sup>44</sup> There were those who pushed the teaching of sonship one step further and denied the visible return of Jesus, maintaining that Christ would only be made visible in fullness in the Body of Christ.<sup>45</sup> One such group was called 'The Move' and Joe McCord, from that group, wrote that,

I frankly cannot get excited about all this controversy as to whether He is also going to appear in an individual form... He is not going to appear apart from His many-membered Body. And I, personally, have not done away with the possibility that He may appear with His many-membered Body... this Scripture isn't totally clear on that, therefore I don't know. But one thing I know is that once I have been made like Him then to see Him will be seeing One who is no longer my Head, but One who is my brother.<sup>46</sup>

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44Bill Britton, *Unlimited Glory*, 121f. 'Caught up' he saw not as a geographical removal but a raising up to a new dimension of spirituality and experience of God.

45Britton refers to such groups in *Unlimited Glory*, 121.

46McCord in *Purpose and Nature of Jesus* (private publication,

Although Britton at times worked alongside 'The Move' he did not fully endorse their teaching on this matter and there is no evidence that Britton ever changed his belief in a visible return of Christ.

There is a clearly apocalyptic element within his writings and he unswervingly held to the belief that Christ was coming back within the generation that he was writing to; he often used typology to validate his claims and although the HCM did not endorse the more apocalyptic elements of his teaching, the underlying thrust of the overcoming final generation was widely applied in the HCM eschatology.<sup>47</sup> Britton's booklets and tapes were widely available and without doubt he had an ongoing influence on the HCM as it developed.<sup>48</sup> He was himself

undated), 19.

47The more apocalyptic elements can be seen in the following quote from p. 124 of *Unlimited Glory*: 'Those who study the Great Pyramid predict that this will take place at the spring equinox of the year 1975... If that date is accurate, then it is not too far away. If it comes before then, PRAISE GOD! But if it does not happen on their schedule, I still have a witness of the Spirit that this is the last generation, and that it will be brought to pass in our day.' He also held to a belief of the 6 days of creation being equivalent of the six millennia with the Sabbath day being the millennium that would begin 2000 or so years after Christ's first advent. Although these more bizarre elements were not endorsed by the HCM virtually all who taught on the book of Revelation, from within the HCM, saw the theme of overcoming as the one key to unlock the book.

48Ian Farr stated that John MacLauchlan was already influenced by Britton's writings and teaching prior to his involvement with other personnel who were to become influential in shaping the HCM. The themes that Britton addresses are some of the same themes that were common within the HCM of the mid-

influenced by Warnock's book *The Feast of Tabernacles*,<sup>49</sup> which he later re-published thus making it available to a wider audience.

### ***Warnock: The Feast of Tabernacles***

The thesis of Warnock's book is that the three main feasts of Israel were to have a fulfilment in history prior to the *parousia*: Passover and Pentecost had already been fulfilled within history but the Feast of Tabernacles awaited its fulfilment. The Feast of Tabernacles then represents God's consummate purposes for the final generation. Some of the headings he used in his book will indicate the emphasis: Tabernacles - the Feast of Unity; the Feast of Ingathering; the Feast of Glory; the Feast of Restoration; the Feast of His Appearing. Such headings leave us in no doubt that here is a belief in a restored church that would far exceed the maturity of the early church, for the New Testament church simply participated in the Feast of Pentecost. That all of this is to occur prior to the *parousia* is clear both implicitly and explicitly:

From the historical standpoint the Church has enjoyed her Passover and her Pentecost - and the age of Pentecost is now about to reach her

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70s as can be seen in some of the articles in such publications as *Fulness* magazine (and indeed by the tape ministry list of John MacLauchlan). Farr also stated that with respect to the Book of Revelation one of the few people quoted with approval was Britton. (Interviews with Farr on 10/8/94 and 14/2/95.)

<sup>49</sup>The original book was published in 1951 by Sharon Publishers, North Battleford.



glorious climax, giving way to the Feast of Ingathering. We stand now in fields “white unto harvest,” when the corn and wine and oil must be gathered in, and God is beginning to send forth his ministers as never before - for this is the Day of the blowing of Trumpets.<sup>50</sup>

In line with LRM teaching he said that ‘the Lord’s coming is a spiritual visitation in the midst of His people as well as a literal and bodily visitation’.<sup>51</sup> Again he makes clear the expectation for a victorious church in his statements on ‘Elijah’s twofold appearance’:

Now we are waiting Christ’s second Appearing, this time in power and glory in the saints, in the fulness of His Body. And therefore we can expect not only an Elijah ministry, but the fulness of the Moses-Elijah ministry. Christ’s first Appearing was in the Head only - in one Man. Hence Elijah appeared in one man, even John the baptist - for his spirit and power rested upon him. Now Christ will appear in His Church the Body. Hence the Moses-Elijah company, to prepare His way.<sup>52</sup>

Warnock’s book was not only a major contribution within the LRM as noted by Riss, but it was a book which was

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50Warnock, *Tabernacles*, 31.

51Warnock, *ibid.*, 104.

52Warnock, *ibid.*, 107. The theme of an Elijah people has been a recurrent theme among radical groups: Latter Rain and the HCM are no exception (see Wright, *The Radical Kingdom*, Kingsway: Eastbourne, 1986, 177).

often to be found on the shelves of the early HCM shapers. MacLauchlan often taught on the Feast of Tabernacles and his interpretation was all-but identical to that of Warnock.<sup>53</sup>

## Summary of the above contributions

Lang and the LRM / Britton do not have much in common but together they gave a framework to the HCM eschatology. Or perhaps more accurately, Lang prepared the framework of firstfruits / harvest and manchild to which Britton gave substance.<sup>54</sup> HCM eschatology then was essentially one of God pouring out his Spirit upon the church in order that at least a portion (often called a remnant) would arrive at maturity. Once this pioneering company had reached maturity they would be the necessary catalyst for the return of Christ. This was the belief of both Lang and Britton. Lang expected that firstfruit company to be raptured, Britton expected them to be caught up to the throne of God; the expectation was different but the framework essentially the same.

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53Interviews with Farr (10/8/94) and Lloyd Pietersen (27/2/95). Pietersen was involved in Bristol Christian Fellowship from 1973 and indicated that MacLauchlan taught on the three Jewish feasts at Bristol during the summer of 1974.

54Nee was also a very influential writer who shaped much of HCM thinking and it is interesting that he too held that the manchild of Revelation 12 was not Christ but the victorious overcoming people of God: *The Glorious Church*, Chapter 4.

## The experience of the Spirit, ecclesiology and HCM eschatology

The two above influences of Lang and the LRM helped give a framework to HCM eschatology particularly as it dovetailed with HCM ecclesiology, but one other factor that cannot be ignored is that the HCM phenomenon was part of the wider charismatic movement. The renewed experience of charismata was understood to confirm that a restorative process was taking place and so their experience of the Spirit also further re-enforced the eschatology. This process of restoration would continue until the *parousia* by which time the church would have reached maturity. An experience of the power and presence of the Spirit can tend to diminish a belief in the *parousia* and push toward an over-emphasis on 'realized eschatology',<sup>55</sup> this over-realization can be seen in more extreme elements within the LRM where some even questioned whether there would be a visible return of Christ, and although such an extreme does not come through in the HCM there is a tendency toward a belief that eschatological victory is 'realizable' prior to the *parousia*.

The Jewish hope, as expressed in Joel 2:28ff., expected

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<sup>55</sup>Andrew T. Lincoln in his study *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), carefully analyses, among other themes, the effect the experience of the Spirit's presence makes on eschatology. Commenting on the Corinthian situation he says, 'The Corinthians believed the kingdom was already here... Their life in the Spirit with its abundance of charismatic gifts seemed to them proof that they were already enjoying the eschatological blessings of freedom and fullness associated with the consummation' (p. 33).

that the Last Days would be marked by the liberal outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>56</sup> The post-Pentecost church had to come to terms with the fact that, with the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit, the Last Days and the New Age had already dawned. Paul's letters often demonstrate the tension that surfaced in those churches of the 'already' but 'not yet' of the kingdom. An overemphasis on one element often had to be corrected by Paul; so we discover, for instance, that at Corinth some of the believers had lost that tension by collapsing the future hope of resurrection into present spiritual ecstasy, and it was this imbalance that Paul had to address.<sup>57</sup> This same tension has often risen in many of the 'charismatic' movements within history: one need only reflect on the Montanists of the second century or the Catholic Apostolic Church (the so-called 'Irvingites') of the nineteenth to note that with both those 'charismatic' movements the tension was removed through adopting a more apocalyptic approach insisting that the kingdom was already present in fullness, or, at least, about to arrive in the very near future. In the same way the HCM emphasis has been

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56A good summary of Jewish hopes (including the hope for the outpouring of the Spirit) is found in Chapter 10 'The hope of Israel' of N.T. Wright's book *The New Testament and the People of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992). Other OT passages indicating that the outpouring of the Spirit would mark the new age are: Is. 32:15; 61:1; Ezek. 37:14.

57Ralph Martin in 'The Spirit in 2 Corinthians in Light of the "Fellowship of the Holy Spirit"', in W. Hulitt Gloer (ed.), *Eschatology and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988) 121 covers this aspect with specific reference to 1 Cor. 15:12-26.

one of 'Kingdom Now',<sup>58</sup> rather than that of a kingdom to come post-*parousia*. The latter aspect has never been denied but the emphasis has always been on the presence of that future kingdom within the present experience of the church.

The belief that the (eschatological) Spirit was present in a new way, specifically to restore the church, inevitably contributed to the HCM eschatology of Christ's victory being manifest to a great measure within this current age. Although the HCM did not totally confuse the church (the body of Christ) with the risen body of Christ, nor the organic growth of the church for the *parousia*, there was a strong emphasis on the church as the body of Christ and the work of the Spirit in causing its growth. Such emphases often reinforce a belief in the church's effective participation in the manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth prior to the *parousia*. Beker makes a poignant observation that,

when the doctrine of the church is viewed as the key to Paul's thought, apocalyptic and Christology tend to become so conflated and fused that the "body of Christ" (= the church) becomes identified with the risen body of Christ and the organic growth of the church is substituted for the *parousia* of Christ. Such a conflation of apocalyptic and Christology results

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<sup>58</sup>This phrase is the title of Gerald Coates' book published by Kingsway in 1993. Although this phrase has often been used as a popular label to describe the Reconstructionist position, Coates' work is not Reconstructionist but does show the overriding emphasis of the HCM on the availability of the kingdom this side of the *parousia*.

in an inflation of the concept of the church in Paul and has dire consequences for the relation of the church and world and their mutual relation to the coming apocalyptic triumph of God.<sup>59</sup>

Without doubt one of the central issues for the HCM was its ecclesiology. This was the starting point for Wallis and Lillie and became one of the dividing issues that set it apart from the wider renewal movement. The Ephesian epistle has always remained central within the HCM, particularly as the church is central in its focus and it is in this letter that a rationale is found for the belief in apostolic and prophetic ministry whose purpose is to bring the church to maturity. Ephesians does not express the same hope of the imminent return of Christ that we find in other letters; rather there is a focus on his cosmic Lordship whose fullness fills the church.<sup>60</sup> With this letter as central it should not be surprising that there has been little emphasis within HCM circles of the Lord coming as a 'thief in the night'. Rather the theme of the ascended Lord's outpouring of ministry-gifts to mature the church has received prominence.

The above influences of Lang, LRM, the renewal of the Spirit coupled to the ecclesiology were the main shaping elements within the developing HCM. To see how they outwork an analysis of *Fulness* magazine will illustrate

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59J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 68.

60See comments to this effect by John Ziesler in *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 131-133.

what the recurrent eschatological themes are.<sup>61</sup> This magazine is important as it was the earliest, regular source for HCM teaching and was seen by some to remain as a significant voice for the HCM throughout the years it was published. Even in its last issue (1979) it is said to have been described by some as ‘the organ of The House Church Movement’.

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<sup>61</sup>*Fulness* magazine was initially published in 1970 (although they are undated). Four volumes were published in the initial format over a two year period and a further 26 volumes with a new format came out between 1972 and 1979. Other than the last four volumes they were published under the editorial direction of Graham Perrins. It was the main voice for the HCM and remained so until 1975 when *Restoration* magazine was published. The title itself indicates the emphasis and shows at least an implicit link with the teaching of Britton; it is reflective of HCM theology from this important period: *Restoration* magazine presents a slightly different emphasis and as it developed reflects other influences that come to bear on portions of the HCM. (Walker, *Restoring*, documents the history of the respective magazines on pp. 63, 95, 104, 114; and the division under his rubric of R1/R2 on pp. 80-121.)

## Chapter 4

### **An Analysis of 'Fulness' magazine**

*Fulness* magazine placed a great emphasis upon the nature of the church and its need to be constantly responding to God. There is an implicit (and at times explicit) criticism of what was seen as the human creation of denominational structures; the belief that *Fulness* presents is that only a church that constantly responds to God can become the catalyst to bring in the end and that a loyalty to denominational structures will stand in the way of that possibility. Differing, but closely related, ecclesiological / eschatological themes are listed below that occur throughout the magazine:

#### **The church: a remnant faithful to God**

Volumes 1-4 are taken up predominantly with a series of articles entitled 'A Remnant Shall Return' by Ted Crick. The Old Testament prophecies of a remnant returning from captivity are used to indicate that a remnant of God's people shall be led out of captivity in order to fulfil the purposes of God. The church (as with the Old Testament people) has been in 'exile' and bondage, however the promise of restoration is now being actualised with the renewal of the Spirit and the faithful 'remnant' are being led by God to possess the 'land' that God had promised. By clear implication the renewal of the Spirit and the formation of 'house



churches' were seen as evidence of this restoration. In those early volumes there is no visible emphasis on the later-HCM theme of discipleship, but a visionary call to a radical church life: this theme continues throughout the history of *Fulness*, for it is only a radical church that can see the purposes of God fulfilled. Perrins, for instance, states in a later *Fulness* that,

We must work for the removal of denominational barriers... we must pray for leaders to arise who will have a burden to establish one church in one locality and so demonstrate a true unity... There must be no half measures, no drawing back because of the difficulties... We cannot afford to be anything less than radical. The Spirit of God is in our midst leading us on in thought and life to the place of fulness.<sup>1</sup>

The twin themes of a restored and united church with the concept of 'fullness' are linked, indicating again how inseparable the eschatology was from the ecclesiology.

## **The church: the central key**

There is no doubt that the mature church is viewed as the catalyst that will usher in the end. This perspective is so strong that Thompson can ask a series of questions that, by implication, come close to denying the importance of evangelism:

Am I getting my priorities round the right way?  
If it is the case that the Church must be

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1 Perrins' editorial 'Are we radical enough?', *Fulness*, Vol. 6, 3.

restored before the rest of the world can be saved, am I neglecting the rebuilding of the Church by being over-involved in traditional evangelistic efforts?<sup>2</sup>

The church, rather than Israel, is also seen as the key to the fulfilment of the promises of God. In an obvious sideswipe at Dispensationalism, MacLauchlan states that, 'Scripture knows nothing of the teaching that the Church is an 'interim measure' to fill a gap in God's dealings with the Jews. Rather, the Church is the goal for which OT Israel paved the way and the spiritual house, nation and people for which God has longed.'<sup>3</sup>

## **The church: a victorious body**

There is an underlying emphasis that 'we are living at the end of the age'<sup>4</sup>, which must be understood to have specific chronological implications rather than simply being a theological

description of the post-Pentecost era. The HCM believed it was a movement of destiny for the outpouring of the Spirit, and the restoration of the church indicated that the *parousia* was all but in sight. Pullin states:

So we come to the momentous days in which we live... It is equally certain that God must triumph and that he has committed himself to establishing his glory among his people, totally

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2 Thompson 'The Tabernacle of David', *Fulness*, Vol. 8, 11.

3 *Fulness*, Vol. 11, 11.

4 *Fulness*, Vol. 11, 11.

and irreversibly. The hour of victory is near. We are witnessing the last great rise in the history of the people of God.<sup>5</sup>

Although deception was an ever-increasing danger in the 'end-times' the overcoming nature of the people of God was currently being manifested:

These are days when deception is going forth into the world but, praise God, he is going to have a people who are not deceived. He is going to have a people who are going to usher in his glory and the God of peace is going to tread down Satan under our feet, Hallelujah! The Serpent is not going to deceive God's overcoming people, they are going to cast him out of the heavenly places by their overcoming lives so that the glorious kingdom of God might be established.<sup>6</sup>

## **A final mature generation**

*Fulness* presents the concept that there is an ongoing (and restorative) work of the Spirit from generation to generation; this work will go on until there is a final generation of God's people that is 'mature'. Some quotes will indicate the strength of this theme:

One generation will pioneer new ground for the next. God will enable his people to put away false distinctions and man-made divisions, until

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5 Pullin, 'The Sleeping Beauty', *Fulness*, Vol. 14, 9.

6 Lyne, *Fulness*, Vol. 6, 18.

'we all reach the unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature'.<sup>7</sup>

James saw David's tent as a picture of the Church in its earthly form, filled with the presence of God. He believed that a company of ordinary people, familiar with their own weakness, would come into full glory prior to Jesus' return. Just as the Lord had been 'enthroned upon the praises of Israel' for one generation prior to Solomon's temple, so James was looking forward to a single generation of church life lived in the full victory of God's presence leading up to the wonderful climax of Jesus' return.<sup>8</sup>

Although John MacLauchlan refutes the idea that 'this generation' must be the final generation he states that,

There are very encouraging signs in the church. The world seems to be approaching the time of fulness of Babylon. In a sense the stage seems to be set. We can so respond to the God of glory, to our risen Lord, that not only will the principles of God's dealings be fulfilled in our generation, but also the 'goal will come'.<sup>9</sup>

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7 Perrins, 'Denominations and Divisions', *Fulness*, Vol. 7, 6.

8 Thompson, 'Tabernacle', *Fulness*, Vol. 8, 9, commenting on Acts 15:14-19.

9 *Fulness*, Vol. 12, 15 in answer to the question 'Is it true that this generation will see the fulfilment of God's purposes?'

MacLauchlan also states that the process of maturity (the ministries of Ephesians 4:11-16) will result in the 'clear, concrete manifestation of perfection', for Jesus' return will be 'to reign in union with a truly perfect and glorious Church'.<sup>10</sup> Underlying the HCM eschatology, then, is a belief in a final generation of believers that are mature to such an extent that the church 'fulfils its calling as surely as Jesus fulfilled his.'<sup>11</sup>

## Firstfruits and harvest

Charles Scmitt and John MacLauchlan make explicit what is implicit throughout many of the articles in *Fulness*, by picking up the (LRM) theme of 'Firstfruits and Harvest'.<sup>12</sup> As with Britton, Warnock and others within the LRM, not only was the church reaching maturity understood to be the key to the conclusion of this age, but that the church would reach this maturity in two stages. There would be a firstfruit company that would be a sign of the coming harvest. Scmitt states that 'What has barely begun in this present charismatic visitation, will yet be climaxed just ahead of us in the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit ever seen upon the face of the earth.'<sup>13</sup> MacLauchlan likewise develops the theme of the firstfruits using the book of Revelation as his source to say that,

First a remnant, called first-fruits, and then the

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<sup>10</sup>*Fulness*, Vol. 13, 13.

<sup>11</sup>Perrins' editorial 'Jesus the Prophet', *Fulness*, Vol. 9, 3.

<sup>12</sup>Scmitt 'Firstfruits', *Fulness*, Vol. 19, p. 20; MacLauchlan 'The City of God', *Fulness* Vol. 11, 16-18.

<sup>13</sup>*Fulness*, Vol. 19, 20.

whole church, called the harvest, come to fulness and enter into resurrection (Rev 14). Even before resurrection the first-fruits ripen ready for reaping, and are pictured in Revelation 11 as 'two witnesses'... Only when their testimony is completed can the 'beast that comes up out of the abyss... overcome them and kill them'. The end-time, world-wide, totalitarian kingdom of man seems to have defeated them. Mankind rejoices. But God's answer is resurrection, and he raises this remnant company to the throne! Truly they are first-fruits of all his heart and purpose for man.<sup>14</sup>

## **Conclusions and summary on Fulness eschatology**

There is a clear emphasis on the centrality of the church as being the key to usher in the end of this age; Israel is not the key, nor even evangelism, but a mature church. The teaching is that this maturity will be achieved through the ministry gifts of Ephesians 4 and take place in two stages: a firstfruit stage as God matures a remnant church, and a harvest stage that consists of a great ingathering at the close of this age. All the above is presented within a pre-millennial framework (as was the eschatology of the LRM).<sup>15</sup> Although this age was to

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<sup>14</sup>*Fulness*, Vol. 11, 18.

<sup>15</sup>MacLauchlan 'The Millenium [sic]' *Fulness*, Vol. 19, 22f. In all the personal contact that I have had with those who were in contact with the teaching of the HCM throughout this formative period of the early 1970s I have been unable to find anyone

be closed by an outpouring of God's Spirit this was never understood in post-millennial terms. The triumph that would be achieved through these mature firstfruits would not be that of 'christianising' the nations; indeed the earthly triumph of the firstfruits would come to an end through the martyrdom of those saints.<sup>16</sup>

There is a continual encouragement to be the (final) generation that would fulfil the purposes of God. MacLauchlan did not accept that there was a fixed chronology stating that,

there can be no fixed, decreed time-scale. In previous generations, many principles of prophecy were fulfilled, but none of them closed the circle and brought end-time fulfilment of prophecy. The way is wide open for this generation to respond to God and see the completion of his purposes.<sup>17</sup>

Perrins by implication accepted a similar approach when he quotes with approval the thesis of the German historian, Ranke that 'every generation is equidistant from eternity'.<sup>18</sup>

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who held to a post-millennial or even an a-millennial position. Forster on tape ('The Millennium') said that Arthur Wallis did correspond with him over this period with the suggestion that he wanted to 'get rid' of the millennium. The correspondence was taken no further.

16MacLauchlan 'The City of God' *Fulness*, Vol. 11, 18.

17MacLauchlan *Fulness*, Vol. 12, 15.

18Perrins' editorial 'The importance of the prophetic' *Fulness*, Vol. 14, 3.

The eschatology presented in the pages of *Fulness* is essentially that of the LRM. Although Old Testament imagery and typology is used, it is an interpretation of the book of Revelation that is the main Scriptural appeal. This is made very explicit in the teaching of MacLauchlan, who maintained that the key that unlocks the book is the theme of 'overcoming'. Throughout the book the Spirit's appeal to the church is for an overcoming people to rise up (particularly seen in the letters to the seven churches and the words 'To the one that overcomes...'). These 'overcomers' are described in subsequent chapters as the firstfruits of the final harvest, the two witnesses and the manchild.<sup>19</sup> This outline was not original to MacLauchlan and the HCM; it follows the line of teaching that Lang gave on the firstfruits / harvest, and even more specifically adopts the pattern laid out in the teaching of the LRM.

As the volumes of *Fulness* unfold there are less articles devoted to overtly eschatological themes and more that developed the practical issues of church life such as leadership, practical discipleship and relationships. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the eschatology essentially changes. There is a move toward more practical issues of Christian living for two reasons: a less dogmatic stance on the nearness of the end and a recognition that 'prophetic' rhetoric that is not backed up by practical living is empty and futile.

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<sup>19</sup>The tape series on Revelation by John MacLauchlan makes this clear.



## The continuation of 'primitive' HCM eschatology

The eschatology that is outlined in Fulness magazine, with its parallel (or even, source) in the LRM, does not disappear and its continuation can be seen, for example, in the popular work by John and Christine Noble, *Everyman's Guide to the Holy Spirit, the End of the World and You*.<sup>20</sup> Although the more extreme statements of the LRM are absent, nevertheless a LRM-type emphasis is present. For Noble, the manifestation of the sons of God is the church coming into a place of mature unity, power and authority. He states:

The great task of the five-fold ministry gifts of Jesus to his church is to release this great army of partners into the material world to usher in God's kingdom age and bring back the king. In Romans 8:19 Paul showed us that nature itself is waiting with eager anticipation for this appearing of the mature church... longing for the day when the sons of God will walk the earth in power and victory.<sup>21</sup>

The birth of the manchild in Revelation chapter 12 is seen to be the 'pivotal point of the whole book'.<sup>22</sup> Again following Lang, Nee (who influenced Noble considerably) and the LRM, Noble maintains that this manchild is not Christ, but the mature church. He states:

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<sup>20</sup>Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991.

<sup>21</sup>*Guide*, 76f.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 183.

I believe this particular passage is not referring to Mary and Jesus; they have already played their part... However, although there are many wonderful fulfilments of this picture, there will come one supreme fulfilment as we draw near to the end of all things... The manchild, or mature church, at last becomes the witness Christ called us to be! Jesus in all his glory is manifest first in his corporate, spiritual, body for all the world to see before he comes in his glorified physical body.<sup>23</sup>

Another LRM theme, the concept of the two-fold 'coming' of Christ, is also proposed by Noble:

Nevertheless, I believe that we have majored so much on his Second Coming that we have neglected to understand and emphasise the importance of his prior mystical coming in his spiritual body, which is the church. We must not be satisfied or rest from our labours until we see this 'fulness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13) is attained within at least a significant minority of the church.<sup>24</sup>

Again, Noble states that Christ has been 'seen throughout history in differing measure in his church, but will be plainly visible in his people at the end of the age in all his majesty and power'; at that time there will be a 'moment in history when the Lord looks at the oneness

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23Ibid., 183f.

24Ibid., 184.

of his people and finds that his heart is satisfied.<sup>125</sup>

In a similar vein Noble suggests that the 'two witnesses' of Revelation chapter 11 is another picture of the manchild of Chapter 12 and that both are 'pictures of the church of Jesus in the last days'. Although he does not insist on an exact mathematical understanding, the fact that these two witnesses are described as the 'two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth' suggests to Noble that the whole church is not being described (the two lampstands being contrasted to the seven lampstands that depict the universal church in the opening chapters of the book of Revelation) but that a 'significant portion, two-sevenths of the whole church' has reached maturity. This interpretation of Revelation then allows Noble to outline his expectation of an escalation in the last days. Jesus will become 'clearly visible everywhere among his people in character and power. Then we can expect all hell to be let loose as Satan seeks to destroy this manifestation and embodiment of Jesus in our lives.'<sup>126</sup>

For Noble, as for the LRM and the early HCM, it is only a church that has grown to maturity that will bring this age to a close:

Only then will the gospel of the Kingdom impact all the nations and every single people group represented on the earth. Only then will we scale the high walls of false religion, materialism and secularism, bringing down their fortresses. Only then will the Jew be provoked

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25Ibid., 204f.

26Ibid., 188.

to jealousy, as he sees the Gentile church enjoying the benefits and powers of a kingdom which he considers to be rightfully his.<sup>27</sup>

It is also worth noting that Roger Forster, an early influencer on the HCM's eschatology, has essentially not moved his position, as can be seen from the teaching given within the Ichthus network. Due to the continual influence of Forster and the distinctive stream that Ichthus represents, Forster's approach will be examined separately in a later chapter.

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<sup>27</sup>*ibid.*, 188.

## **Part 2: Division, development and diversification**

## Chapter 5

### The Influence of Ern Baxter and the HCM division of 1976

A significant division within the HCM took place in 1976 which was so far reaching that Walker is able to use his algebraic notation of R1 / R2 to describe the two sections from that time. One group of churches (R1) were aligned around Jones and Wallis, the other around Noble, Coates and the so-called 'London Brothers', with the magazines *Restoration* and *Fulness* respectively becoming the voices for the two groups.<sup>1</sup>

A very influential figure in the period leading up to the division was William John Ernest Baxter (1914-92). He was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and for a short while was pastor of a Pentecostal church until he left over doctrinal differences. He then pastored an independent congregation in Vancouver, coming into contact with William Branham in 1947 and soon afterward with the Latter Rain Movement. Although influenced by positive aspects of the movement he soon separated from the LRM expressing his concerns over 'uncorrected sin, corruption, and unsound doctrine'.<sup>2</sup> Baxter was later to become a respected Bible-teacher within charismatic circles and along with four others

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1 Walker, *Restoring*, 80-121, describes the division and subsequent developments.

2 *Pentecostal Dictionary*, 52, article on 'Baxter' by S. Strang.

were collectively known as the 'Fort Lauderdale Five'.<sup>3</sup> In 1972 they changed their name to 'Christian Growth Ministries' and through a highly successful teaching magazine called *New Wine* (1969-86) they influenced many within the charismatic movement on both sides of the Atlantic. The most controversial element of the teaching was that of 'shepherding', in which a one-to-one relationship of accountability was advocated for everyone within the church.<sup>4</sup>

Baxter's concerns over LRM teaching were to surface afresh in 1976 at the South and West Bible week, held at Bath under the organisation of Peter Lyne, and through Wallis Baxter's concerns were to contribute toward the division that occurred within the HCM later that year.<sup>5</sup> When Baxter heard both MacLauchlan and Pullin teaching on 'the manifest sons' and 'the remnant' he understood this to be nothing other than the LRM teaching that he had observed in Canada some 25 years previously. Baxter considered that the LRM had moved into excess and error and so he voiced his concerns. Those perspectives were, at least in measure, taken up by Wallis and expressed in his letter outlining the errors of the R2 section of the HCM.<sup>6</sup>

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3 The four other men were: Charles Simpson, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince and Don Basham. Walker, *Restoring*, 85-91, covers their development and involvement with the HCM.

4 This theme of 'shepherding' had already been introduced to the UK in 1972 with the visit of Orville Swindoll and Keith Benson from Argentina (later made popular in the works of Juan Carlos Ortiz).

5 Walker *Restoring*, 91-100 recounts this history.

6 Walker *Restoring*, 99 mentions that Wallis objected to the

Baxter was later to have a deep involvement in a stream led by Barney Coombs, often known as Salt and Light, and was persistent in his opposition to LRM teaching. Dave Richards, one of the most significant leaders of that network, in response to a written question 'Have you heard of the Latter Rain Movement?', replied with 'Yes - but we were warned off due to its excesses by W.J. Ern Baxter'.<sup>7</sup>

In the mid-70s he addressed significant HCM-based events and it was his visits to the UK between 1975 and 1977 to the Lakes/Dales Bible weeks that were to make a lasting

impact on the HCM scene. Thompson said that the third visit of Baxter was a major watershed for his own understanding of the kingdom; it was during that visit he heard Baxter declare that the victory of the cross would be expressed within history. His theme at the Dales Bible week in that year (1977) was of taking the nations through aggressive spiritual warfare and he used such phrases as 'placing the cross across the town halls of our nations'.<sup>8</sup> The message was triumphalistic and there was clearly an inherent post-millennialism being expressed, although Thompson remarked that Baxter would not be drawn to elaborate on how he understood this triumphalism would be expressed within society.<sup>9</sup> Coming from North America it was the size of the UK

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'remnant' teaching that was favoured by people such as Perrins, Crick, MacLauchlan etc.

7 Response to questionnaire sent to church leaders.

8 Interview with Thompson on 10/11/94.

9 Thompson interview.



that attracted Baxter; it was sufficiently small to see his vision of the kingdom implemented in such a way as to make the UK something of a model. The binding of the strong man, the principality over the UK, was to be done there and then on the Friday evening of the week with the expected result that there would be an unleashing of an unparalleled movement of God in revival.<sup>10</sup>

Tomlinson stated that Baxter brought with him the 'perfect plot' which fitted easily with Restorationism. The teaching was a natural fit and gave a strong prospective viewpoint to R1; due to the Brethren / Watchman Nee influence from the earlier days of the HCM there had always been a retrospective approach, that of emphasising the need to get back to the life of the early church. This retrospective perspective, Tomlinson stated, was of some interest to those within R1 who were looking to recover the purity of the early church, but it was Baxter who added the impetus and forward momentum to R1. The eschatological framework of Baxter gave everything else a point of reference: the pastoral struggles, church order and discipline now had a clear purpose.

## **Baxter, Post-millennialism and R1**

As with many of the teachers within the HCM and the wider charismatic movement of that time there is very little that is in writing and so it is not possible to find a statement that makes explicit Baxter's millennial views.

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<sup>10</sup>Information from an interview with David Tomlinson, on 28/6/96. Tomlinson joined Jones in 1972 and was with R1 right through this period until the early 1980s.

However, in a conference on Prophecy, Baxter stated:

I would personally prefer to establish my doctrinal positions on clear-cut propositional statements in the non-apocalyptic parts of the Bible and then approach the symbolic and apocalyptic.<sup>11</sup>

When the above quote is taken in the wider context of his teaching, Baxter's statement indicates that he was unhappy with a pre-millennial school of thought and, further, since he understood the rider on the white horse of Revelation 19:11-16 as a description of the triumph of the Gospel within history it is fairly clear that he was in fact post-millennial.<sup>12</sup>

Baxter acknowledged the influence of 'Reconstructionism', but refused to embrace it fully, and it is best to understand his millennial views as being classically post-millennial rather than Reconstructionist.<sup>13</sup> He also introduced the post-

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11Notes from a conference in Mobile, Alabama, May 25-28, 1984, Session 3, p. 4.

12I was informed of his understanding of the rider and the white horse by Thompson in an interview on 10/11/94. Stanley Grenz *The Millennial Maze*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1992 points out that the interpretation of this vision is a key element in separating a-millennialism from post-millennialism (see particularly pp. 72-74). The a-millennialist understands this vision as depicting the *parousia* and so must place a chronological divide between chapters 19 and 20; the post-millennialist sees this vision as the triumph of the Gospel in history and no division between chapters 19 and 20. It is within this latter category that Baxter fits.

13In the later years of *New Wine* although Reconstructionist

millennial work of Marcellus Kik into R1 circles, and this remained an influence on that segment of the HCM.<sup>14</sup> Prior to Baxter, virtually all HCM eschatology had been pre-millennial, so, for example, Thompson acknowledged G.H. Lang and then G.E. Ladd as the early influences on his eschatology, both of whom were pre-millennial. Kik later became a third influence on him through Baxter's visits when this new element was injected into the R1 strand of the HCM. Although not all within R1 were now to become post-millennialist in belief, the training college for Covenant Ministries, Covenant College, recommended *The Puritan Hope*<sup>15</sup> to its students as one of their textbooks.<sup>16</sup>

Although there continues to be a variety of millennial views within the HCM the R1stream tends toward post-millennialism. David Matthew, in a letter to Tony Higton, states,

As a team of ministries and network of churches, our general position on

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writers contributed to it, there is no evidence to suggest that either New Wine or R1 adopted Reconstructionism. There was clearly a great sympathy for some of the views expressed with that teaching and in an interview on 10/11/94 Thompson produced a recently published Reconstructionist book *He Shall Have Dominion* by Kenneth L. Gentry Jr, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992, saying that it was being widely read within R1 circles at the time of the interview.

14 Kik's book is entitled *An Eschatology of Victory* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974).

15Iain Murray *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1971).

16Interview with Thompson 10/11/94.

eschatological issues is more post-millennial than anything else. We see the kingdom growing (Daniel's rock, the yeast and the mustard seed) and Christ's triumph progressing steadily, his enemies being subdued until, at his coming, there remains only 'the last enemy', death, to be conquered.<sup>17</sup>

Matthew does, however, reject the accusation of triumphalism, stating that, 'proponents of postmillennialism have sometimes been summarily written off as 'triumphalists'. We see an enormous difference between an unthinking, gung-ho triumphalism and a positive outlook of triumph for Christ and his church in this age. We utterly reject the former, while embracing the latter.'<sup>18</sup>

The above correspondence between Matthew and Higton clearly indicates that postmillennialism is the tendency of R1. The consultation that provoked the correspondence between Matthew and Higton took place at Hothorpe Hall, September 19-21, 1994 under the umbrella of Time Ministries International and it was a representative from R1, Hugh Thompson, that presented the post-millennial view on that occasion.

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<sup>17</sup>Letter from Matthew to Tony Higton on 19/7/94. This statement of Matthew mirrors almost exactly Baxter's notes: 'The last enemy death will be defeated in the resurrection, at the last trump when the *parousia* occurs... All other enemies subdued by "reign" - death by resurrection.' (Baxter's notes, Prophecy conference, Mobile, Session 3, 4f.

<sup>18</sup>Memorandum from Matthew to Tony Higton on 5/8/94.

## Excursus on Reconstructionism and the HCM

Reconstructionism owes its shape to its founding figure and most significant thinker, Rousas J. Rushdoony, who set up a publishing, research and educational facility called 'The Chalcedon Foundation' in 1965 with a primary aim to 'promote biblical Christianity in an age of apostasy'. As one of its promotional leaflets states it:

Christian Reconstructionism is a call to the church to awaken to its biblical responsibility to subdue the earth for the glory of God. While holding to the priority of individual salvation, Christian reconstruction also holds that cultural renewal is to be the necessary and expected outworking of the gospel as it progressively finds success in the lives and hearts of men. Christian Reconstruction therefore looks for and works for the rebuilding of the institutions of society according to a biblical blueprint.<sup>19</sup>

In his *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, published in 1973, Rushdoony put Pentecostalism in its place, writing that, 'If the law is denied as the means of sanctification, then, logically, the only alternative is Pentecostalism, with its antinomian and unbiblical doctrine of the Spirit.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Quoted in a lecture entitled 'A Reconstructionist view of Church and State' by Stuart Murray, Theology Forum, Birmingham, 2/10/93, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>Quoted in Cox, *Fire*, 293. (The Institutes of Biblical Law published by Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973; Cox wrongly entitles it The Institutes of Christian Law.)

However by the late-1980s Rushdoony claimed that twenty million charismatics espoused Reconstructionist beliefs, suggesting that the link between the two groups was their mutually optimistic view of the future,<sup>21</sup> and as noted above Reconstructionism had an influence on Baxter, *New Wine* magazine and certain strands of the HCM.<sup>22</sup> Gary North, another influential Reconstructionist, stated that there was a joining of hands between Charismatics and Reconstructionists because:

Some Pentecostals weren't satisfied. They had seen God at work... They recognized that God moves in history to heal the sick and dying. Always in the back of any Pentecostal's mind is this nagging question: "If God can heal a sick person, why can't He heal a sick society?"... Then in the late 1970s, a handful of Pentecostal-charismatics discovered Christian Reconstruction. They finally got the answer they were looking for: God can heal a sick society. Better yet: God will heal a sick world through a great movement of the Holy Spirit.

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21H. Wayne House & Thomas Ice *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland: Multnomah, 1988), p. 22.

22Nigel Wright in 'Restoration', *Themelios* 16.2, (Jan / Feb 1991), notes this as applying particularly to the Basingstoke group of churches under the leadership of Barney Coombs. He states that '[m]ore recently Barney Coombes' [sic] extensive North American connections have drawn his interest to developing Reconstructionism, a right-wing social and political philosophy developed by R.J. Rushdoony which purports to apply biblical law to social affairs.'

These men dropped dispensationalism, and adopted a world-and-life view that is consistent with the victories that charismatics have seen first-hand.<sup>23</sup>

This joining of hands was practically expressed in a conference in Dallas in October 1987 where those from diverse streams within Reconstructionism met together to discover the common ground they shared. Around one hundred delegates attended the conference, roughly two-thirds of which were charismatics and one-third non-charismatic Calvinists. A close colleague of Baxter, Bob Mumford, was present<sup>24</sup> and he released a video series around this time entitled 'Kingdom Philosophy of Life' in which a modified Reconstructionist agenda was advocated.<sup>25</sup> There is considerable evidence that these links between Reconstructionists and Charismatics will continue. Dr. Jay Grimstead, from the Pentecostal Holiness denomination, is seeking to bring together the different dominion, Kingdom Now and Reconstructionist groups under the umbrella of the Coalition of Revival; as part of the strategy a new college (Kingdom College) is to be opened. Not surprisingly, Rushdoony is a member of the steering committee, and it is planned that he will teach the students the vital courses on biblical law.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>North, 'Reconstructionist Renewal and Charismatic Renewal', *Christian Reconstruction*, (May-June 1988), 2, quoted in *Dominion Theology*, 377.

<sup>24</sup>*Dominion Theology*, 369-370.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>26</sup>Cox, *Fire*, 293.

Reconstructionism, as its name implies, suggests that society is to be 'reconstructed' along biblical lines; it is firmly post-millennial with an inherent optimism that the victory of Christ will be expressed within history prior to the *parousia*. The goal is a Christian renaissance with every aspect of society brought under the rule of Christ. Gary North, one of the most controversial figures in the movement, writes that 'person by person, church by church, occupation by occupation, nation by nation, the world is to be brought under the dominion of God.'<sup>27</sup>

At the heart of its teaching is a theonomy that maintains Old Testament law is the means by which all society is to be governed, refusing to limit such law to Israel as a unique theocratic state.<sup>28</sup> In the light of a perceived decline in morals within society, and the desire to influence it, Reconstructionists have provided Christians with a system that furnishes them with the ability to make a response on many (if not all) current social issues.<sup>29</sup> It is therefore not surprising that aspects of

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27 *Unconditional Surrender*, (Tyler, Tx: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), 384.

28 A suitable summary and critique of Reconstructionism is found in 'Democracy as Heresy', *Christianity Today*, Feb. 20th. 1987.

29 The decline in society has been seen primarily as a decline in private morals rather than issues of social justice. This perceived decline in morals is then characterised particularly with the rise of abortion and the growing acceptance of sexual relationships other than that of the monogamous heterosexual relationship. As most of the HCM has been white middle-class, Reconstructionism can appear attractive to those whose understanding of morality is private and whose politics are to the right on the political scale.



their teaching have appealed to those within HCM circles; indeed as Walker states in relationship to the HCM:

Reconstructionism appeals to a movement that is interested in God's rule and a kingdom built on biblical lines. It is the sort of theory that could be predicated on a dying Restorationism. One could argue that as the revivalistic fires cool down and God seems to be staying his hand, maybe this is a sign that the kingdom has to be built before the final return.<sup>30</sup>

There is no evidence that Reconstructionism has been fully embraced by any of the diverse streams within the HCM, but through addressing the agenda of how the church is to influence the world-system, the 'softer' end of Reconstructionist teaching has made inroads into certain groups that would be more easily identified as belonging within Walker's sociological R1 grouping. Stuart Murray suggests that few British Christians would adopt the whole Reconstructionist package but notes the appeal to HCM circles, stating,

Within the "new churches", for example, Reconstructionists' use of "restoration" and "kingdom" language, critique of institutional Christianity, views on tithing, the family, education and church authority may also sound familiar and quite promising.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Walker, *Restoring*, 1988 (revised edition), 338.

<sup>31</sup>Above quoted lecture 'Reconstructionist', 12.

Without doubt the question of how the church is to engage the world is a key issue for all Christian groups, and it could well become a test case as to how the diverse groups within the HCM apply their eschatology. A post-millennialism that is influenced by Reconstructionism might well want to begin to influence society, or even dominate, through gaining positions of power and subsequently through introducing 'godly' legislation. Even if other strands of the HCM are less triumphalistic, yet subscribe to a belief in a mature church and a triumphant gospel, it will be important that a coherent apologetic of engagement with the world is produced otherwise the appeal of Reconstructionism (albeit in a modified form) will always be present. Perhaps the renewed interest in Anabaptism might be the means by which an alternative model is put forward.<sup>32</sup>

## End of excursus

### R1 Eschatology post-1976

1976 marks the date of division of the HCM into two distinct 'streams' and formed the basis of Walker's R1/R2 description. Baxter's influence on R1 must not be

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<sup>32</sup>The twice-yearly journal *Anabaptism Today* has on its editorial board Stuart Murray and Noel Moules both of whose roots are from within the HCM (Murray was associated with Noble and Moules with Tomlinson). Forster of Ichthus has identified with an Anabaptist approach on a number of issues since the late 1950s (see *Anabaptism Today*, Issue 7, October 1994).

underestimated and there is a clear post-millennialist leaning from that date and an abandonment of the LRM 'manifest sons' or 'manchild' teaching.

In 1988 the publishing arm for Covenant Ministries (Harvestime) published a book on revelation by Terry Brooks, a pastor in a church in St. Louis that was under the 'apostolic covering' of Bryn Jones.<sup>33</sup> His approach is by no means controversial nor speculative: he maintains that the Apocalypse does not speak of 'specific events or details of history but to principles operating throughout the history of the world'.<sup>34</sup> In relation to LRM teaching (and the teaching of Perrins, MacLauchlan et al.) he does not see the distinction of firstfruits and harvest, for the 144,000 are simply 'the complete number of God's elect people, reconciled by grace';<sup>35</sup> and further the manchild is not the overcoming remnant of the LRM teaching but a description of the incarnation of Christ.<sup>36</sup> As far as endorsing a millennial interpretation is concerned, Brooks' view best fits within that of a-millennialism, stating, '[p]erhaps it is best, then, to conclude that the thousand years symbolises the period extending from the first coming of Christ to just before his return.'<sup>37</sup>

R1 can either be described millennially as post- or as a-millennial. In as much as an optimistic a-millennial

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<sup>33</sup>*Revelation meaningful mysteries for today* (Bradford: Harvestime, 1988).

<sup>34</sup>*Revelation*, 29.

<sup>35</sup>*ibid.*, 80.

<sup>36</sup>*ibid.*, 94-96.

<sup>37</sup>*ibid.*, 119.

approach comes close to being post-millennial it is perhaps best to describe R1 as leaning toward post-millennialism.<sup>38</sup> Indeed the book, *An Eschatology of Victory*,<sup>39</sup> that Baxter introduced to R1 could either be termed post-millennial or (optimistic) a-millennial in approach. Marcellus Kik presents an unusually complex position, thus indicating the closeness of post- and optimistic a-millennial positions. Kik, a post-millennialist, understands the rider on the white horse of Revelation chapter 19 as a symbol of the triumph of the gospel in this age, and as the millennial period of chapter 20 follows on chronologically from this he anticipates an increase of spiritual blessings on the earth sometime in the future<sup>40</sup> yet, unlike most modern post-millennialists, he viewed the millennium as referring to the entire period from the first to the second advent.<sup>41</sup> So, although he is a post-millennialist, if one were to lay aside his interpretation of the white horse and its rider, he could equally be labelled an optimistic a-millennialist. Kik, a Presbyterian, does not share the ecclesiology of the HCM and yet his statements of the church's role in

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38Post-millennialism normally anticipates that the millennium (the golden age) lies in the future while a-millennialism views the entire church-age as the millennium. However an 'optimistic a-millennialist' sees the expression of the kingdom of God (a common theme within the HCM) increasing throughout this age. Such an optimism closes the gap considerably between the post- and a-millennialist positions.

39Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974.

40Ibid., 235.

41Ibid., 205. This view of the millennium is strange to modern post-millennialists but was the view held by Augustine.

eschatology fitted easily within the latter framework. Indeed reading Kik can be like reading parts of Restoration magazine; the following two quotes indicates the great appeal of Kik's eschatology:

Unfortunately the Church of today does not realize the power that Christ has given her. Christ has placed in her hands the chain by which she can bind Satan. She can restrain his influence over the nations. But today the Church bemoans the fact that evil is becoming stronger and stronger. She bemoans the fact that the world is coming more and more under the control of the Devil. Whose fault is that? It is the Church. She has the chain and does not have the faith to bind Satan even more firmly.<sup>42</sup>

These enemies could be completely vanquished if the Christians of this day and age were as vigorous, as bold, as earnest, as prayerful, and as faithful as Christians were in the first several centuries and in the time of the Reformation.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, attempting to define the eschatology of any strand of the HCM simply in millennial terms is to remove it from its restorationist ecclesiology. It is therefore important that R1 is not seen to lean toward post-millennialism simply through a millennialist conviction but that, due to its belief in the restoration of the church, a triumphant view of eschatology is

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42Ibid., 196.

43Ibid., 250.

required. Hence it is the ecclesiology that is the unifying factor in the eschatology of the various strands of the HCM.

The 'father' of the HCM, Wallis, maintained that the great harvest lay in the future and that Christ would return for a triumphant church that had accomplished its world mission. He stated that, 'The greatest chapters of church history have yet to be written, the greatest harvest has yet to be reaped', and again that, 'the return of the Lord is not to bring about a victory that the church failed to accomplish. He returns for an overcoming church.'<sup>44</sup>

Wallis is an optimist and yet he draws back from a total triumphalism: restoration is a process that has begun, yet the restoration of all things awaits the return of Christ;<sup>45</sup> the light will get brighter, but the darkness will equally become darker.<sup>46</sup>

This optimistic view of a triumphant church in the 'end-times' is the common feature to the diverse strands of the HCM. Wright seeks to summarises HCM eschatology as,

a decisive rejection of pessimistic pre-millennialism in favour of a form of post-millennialism which expects the restoring of the church to its NT pattern to be accompanied by a massive and final revival as the immediate

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<sup>44</sup>Matthew (ed), *Arthur Wallis From the prophet's pen*, Bradford: Harvestime, 1989, 185f.

<sup>45</sup>*ibid.*, 187.

<sup>46</sup>*ibid.*, 185.

prelude to the coming of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

Such an analysis is not inaccurate of the majority of the HCM provided the 'form of post-millennialism' can also embrace a pre-millennialist viewpoint! The common ground then is not the millennial issue but the expectation of restoration within the church and revival within the world prior to the return of Christ.

### ***Restoration magazine: R1 eschatology expanded***

In examining the eschatology of R1 an analysis of Restoration magazine indicates that specific teaching on the millennium is missing<sup>48</sup> but that the central theme of a restored and victorious church is the key to understanding the 'end-times'. David Matthew in part 6 of his 'Church Adrift'<sup>49</sup> series gives a good summary of the belief in the restoration of the church as the core element that leads to the return of Christ. He traces the development and recovery of church life with the aid of a graph showing the upward move of the church since the Reformation toward the 'restoration of all things'. The normal level of church life is the level recorded for

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47'Restoration', *Themelios*, Vol. 16.2 (Jan / Feb 1991), 7.

48Without directly stating a position on the millennium Thompson makes his position clear saying that '[a]lthough the dragon, Satan, has been bound so that he can no longer deceive the nations... he will be released for a short time...' He thus indicates either an a- or a post-millennial position. ('Signs of His Coming', *Restoration*, Nov/Dec 1983.)

49'Church Adrift: Part 6 Towards a Global Triumph: The 20th Century', *Restoration* (Nov / Dec 1983).

us in the New Testament; the level of church life in the restoration movement is indicated as coming close to that of the New Testament but in his words the 'trend in our graph is still clearly upward'.<sup>50</sup> The final expectation is for church life to continue to move upward and even exceed the presence and power of the Lord that was present in the New Testament church.

Flowing from this core restorationist approach, certain end-time expectations and beliefs appear in the magazine:

### **(a) The church and not Israel as the key to prophecy**

David Mansell in two articles 'Who are the Jews?' and 'A Future for the Jews?'<sup>51</sup> denies any distinctive status for modern-day Israel / Jews. He states that:

The kingdom was thus taken from them and they became as one of the nations... The special place for the Jews was simply that of being in on things first, the honour of being God's instrument to carry the word to the world. Their ultimate status was to be equal with the other nations who believed.<sup>52</sup>

Yet this is not totally the end for natural Israel in the plan of God for 'incredible things will happen when Jews are saved in large numbers'.<sup>53</sup> However this widespread salvation of Jews will only occur as natural Jews are

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50Ibid., 40.

51Both articles are in *Restoration*, Sept / Oct 1983.

52Ibid., 9.

53Ibid., 12.



provoked to jealousy.<sup>54</sup>

Further indication of the break with a Jewish / Israel-centred eschatology is seen in Thompson's article in the same issue.<sup>55</sup> He said that he could 'find no clear predictions in the OT that Jews must return to Palestine in the last days'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, in one of the last issues of *Restoration* the writers indicated not simply how far they had broken from any Dispensational roots but also how they were seeking to be politically aware in asking the question, 'Israel: the Last Bastion of Apartheid?'<sup>57</sup>

### **(b) A victorious and unified church**

David Matthew wrote '[o]urs is an eschatology of victory - victory now and victory when Jesus returns!' It is clear that the term 'victory' means a visible and tangible victory for he later states that, though the victory was won by Jesus at his first coming, the outworking of that victory, that kingdom, is a process, going on right through this age and being brought to completion at his second coming... It is the growing of the mustard seed to become a tree, the gradual working of the yeast right through the lump of dough (Matt. 13:31-33) as all things

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54Ibid., 12f.

55'The Promised Land'.

56Ibid., 19.

57This was the title of an article by Alan Scotland in *Restoration*, May / June 1991. The whole issue was a mix of biblical exegesis on who are the people of God and a political assessment of the nation of Israel. *Restoration* later followed this with an issue on the promises of God to Ishmael.

are restored (Acts 3:21).<sup>58</sup>

This restoration period is to continue until the conditions that Scripture predicted are fulfilled.<sup>59</sup> At the heart of this restoration is a mature church that will 'stand as a mature expression of the life and power of the Lord Jesus in a hostile world. A holy, united, victorious prophetic testimony that our God reigns!'<sup>60</sup>

### **(c) The winning of a world in a generation**

Wesley Richards stated that 'End-time global evangelism is not just a far-off dream. By the Spirit's power and direction - and our obedience - it can soon become a momentous reality.'<sup>61</sup> Ever since Forster's address of 'Bring back the King' at the Mamhead conference in 1962 the theme of the gospel to the nations has always been acknowledged as a key to the return of Christ. For R1 this means a great harvest followed by one final onslaught of evil. Thompson says that,

it seems clear that even after the gospel's world conquest, the devil will be allowed one final fling when evil men will rage against the church. But with the breath of his mouth Christ

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<sup>58</sup>'Living with a Victory Complex' *Restoration* (Nov / Dec 1983), 14.

<sup>59</sup>*Restoration* (Sept / Oct 1987) devoted four articles to four specifics that would be fulfilled prior to the *parousia*.

<sup>60</sup>David Mansell 'Growing up in Christ', *Restoration* (Sept / Oct 1987), 18.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

will consume them.<sup>62</sup>

### ***R1: A-millennial or post-millennial?***

Hugh Thompson gives a summary of eschatological beliefs within R1 in an article entitled 'Signs of His Coming'.<sup>63</sup> In this article he highlights: signs of God's grace; signs of God's wrath; and signs of Satanic opposition. Under the signs of God's grace he outlines: the universal impact of the gospel; a worldwide visitation of the Spirit; salvation of the fullness of Israel; and a mature, united church. God's wrath will be revealed in the shaking of nature and the overthrow of Babylon which is understood by Thompson as humanism. The signs of Satanic opposition will result in tribulation, apostasy, and the revealing of the man of lawlessness. All of these signs will persist throughout this age, with an intensification toward the end as issues come to a head. Such a view is consistent with an a-millennial approach but it needs to be noted that the article is dated in 1983. By 1987 the Satanic opposition is placed after the triumph of the gospel and not as running parallel to it indicating a view that is more consistent with post-millennialism.<sup>64</sup>

Regardless of what exact millennial position was held by the mid-80s Matthew was able to write in 1983 that:

A growing trend is evident, however, towards an eschatology of victory prior to Christ's

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62'Satan on the Run', *Restoration* (Sept / Oct 1987), 16.

63*Restoration* (Nov / Dec 1983), 3-6.

64See *Restoration* (Sept / Oct 1987).

return, a view with sound Scriptural basis and a long record of acceptance down the centuries. The kingdom of God is seen as a present reality (though with its consummation at the return of Christ), the church being the instrument of that kingdom's sway in society. A great end-time revival is seen as giving a final impetus towards its realisation.<sup>65</sup>

Although Matthew claims that his belief in an eschatology of victory had 'a long record of acceptance' by the church down the centuries, it could be convincingly argued that the church of the early centuries, with its predominant pre-millennial viewpoint, was a clear exception. However such a claim is to make millennialism a central feature of the eschatological debate. For the HCM millennialism as such is not the issue,<sup>66</sup> nor can one element of HCM belief (such as eschatology) be separated from other aspects of HCM teaching. Matthew summarised the development of the Restoration Movement throughout the 1970s by suggesting that specific biblical truths were recaptured.<sup>67</sup>

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65*Restoration* (Nov / Dec 1983), 39f. (italics his).

66Thompson suggested that David Mansell (R1 ministry and writer for *Restoration*) still held to a pre-millennial position. Mansell was convinced by Ladd's argument on exegetical grounds that the verb *ezesan* can only mean physical resurrection. (Interview on 10/11/94.)

67*Restoration* (Nov / Dec 1983), 38f. Although he is perhaps giving a specifically R1 perspective, and that others might have placed emphases elsewhere, he nevertheless indicates the core elements involved in the development of HCM beliefs.

In so doing he indicates how the various elements cohere and how none of them stands in isolation from the others. He suggests that the following elements were recovered:

- the kingdom of God which had been 'hitherto little talked about except in a warped way by Jehovah's Witnesses'
- the nature of the local (gathered) church in a locality
- the understanding of ministries especially that of the apostle and prophet
- the oversight of both individuals and churches
- the release of apostolic teams, and
- that 'a vision of the global triumph of Christ prior to his return was basic to this move of God'.

It is evident that there is an overall 'constellation' of beliefs that necessitates some sort of positive eschatology; at the heart of that eschatology is a belief in the victorious display of the kingdom of God in this age. The church, then, as agent of that kingdom, must be restored to (or perhaps even beyond) a New Testament order so that it becomes effective in expressing God's rule in this age.

It would seem through an examination of Restoration magazine that there is a developing position that leans ever-more toward post-millennialism, perhaps with a journey through a-millennialism. Again, though, it needs to be remembered that the central issue is not millennial but ecclesiological, and the adoption of a post-millennial

position is simply because it is seen to fit best with a restorationist view of the post-Reformation era of church history.

## Chapter 6

### The Eschatology of Other HCM Streams

So far we have considered the development of the eschatology of the HCM, its early LRM-type framework and the post-millennial leanings of the R1 stream. Using the criteria laid out in chapter 1 there are four other important streams that form part of the wider “New Churches” and need to be considered to gain a picture of the current eschatology of the HCM. These are: New Frontiers International, Salt and Light, Ichthus Christian Fellowship and Pioneer. One other group, Bristol Christian Fellowship,<sup>1</sup> will also be considered, before a summary of the current eschatology of the new churches is given.

#### New Frontiers International

The network of churches known as New Frontiers International (abbreviated to NFI) is, numerically, the most significant group of churches that espouse a Restorationist view. The catalyst for the formation of this group was Terry Virgo who, although not one of the original fourteen who met together from the early 1970s, soon became a significant leader within the developing

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1 Bristol Christian Fellowship (BCF) is included as it was heavily influenced by Perrins and MacLauchlan. Consequent to the time of research, BCF was exploring a link with Pioneer. BCF is also illustrative of the wider picture of groups moving away from certain aspects of early HCM eschatology.

HCM. He was closely involved with Bryn Jones and the Dales Bible weeks that Ern Baxter had attended. Virgo then began to shape up Bible weeks in Sussex, initially with Jones, but as his influence grew a separate network developed. Writing in 1991, Wright could state that:

The most significant feature in recent Restorationist developments has been the emergence of Terry Virgo and his Brighton-based New Frontiers network as the most significant figure in succession in the movement to Bryn Jones.<sup>2</sup>

By 1995 well in excess of 100 churches in the UK were directly linked to their 'apostolic' work and their annual Stoneleigh Bible week attracted 20,000 people – perhaps some four or five times as many people as any other of the major groups within the HCM was able to attract during the same period.

Although the largest of the diverse streams, it is perhaps more Reformed in theology than any of the other groups, and not surprisingly its eschatology is also less controversial. Wright, in comparing the background of Jones and Virgo, underlines the more cautious style of NFI, saying that while 'Jones is an erstwhile Pentecostal and shows some of that movement's aggressive drive, Virgo's own background was amongst the Baptists and reflects the more cautious and measured approach of that style.'<sup>3</sup>

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2 Wright, 'Restoration', 6.

3 *Ibid.*, 6.



A number of the men (*sic*) who are part of the leadership of NFI have formally studied theology and some were ordained in historic denominations prior to joining NFI. John Hosier is one such person and is a key shaper on the theology and thinking of NFI. Originally a Baptist pastor, he attended Bible weeks in the 1970s and subsequently developed a strong link with Virgo and NFI as they were setting their own direction independently of Covenant Ministries (Jones' network). After leaving his church, he spent a short time on the staff at Moorlands Bible College before working full-time with Virgo and the NFI team.<sup>4</sup>

Hosier was attracted to Restorationism through the positive proclamation of the presence of the kingdom of God and he discovered that it was 'sub-consciously postmillennial'. In other words the millennial issue was not explicitly discussed but the framework that was used and taught was post-millennial. He describes himself as a 'positive amillennialist' although acknowledged that if he were pressed could fall back to a historic pre-millennial position; the post-millennial position was not an option to him.

Hosier claimed that the main influence on NFI was from mainline evangelicals, particularly of a Reformed persuasion, with two names being mentioned: Martyn Lloyd-Jones and D.A. Carson. With its Reformed theological underpinning, its emphasis on, and understanding of, covenant NFI is nevertheless opposed to the concept of a 'replacement theology' that

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4 All the above information gleaned from an interview with Hosier on 24/8/95.

teaches a replacement of Israel by the church.<sup>5</sup> Although there is a division of opinion within the NFI over the permanence of God's promise regarding the land of Israel to the Jews, there is a uniform expectation of an 'end-time' ingathering of the Jews. Hosier himself wants to argue for the permanence of the land:

The crux of the issue is this. Was God's covenant with Israel conditional, or unconditional? If unconditional then the covenant promises belong to national Israel whether in faith or sin. If conditional on faith then the covenant and the promises belong to those who have the same faith as Abraham, ie the Church... I personally feel that there is an unconditional covenant with Israel on this issue... Now I would maintain that Israel's present possession of the land is not only because of a legal declaration by the U.N. but by extraordinary (surely miraculous) military preservation.<sup>6</sup>

Although there is an emphasis on Israel that is unusual within the HCM the central focus and key to all eschatological events is the church. In his concluding remarks in his paper Hosier states,

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5 Generally speaking the early HCM leaned heavily toward a straightforward replacement theology, thus sometimes giving no further distinctive significance to the Jew. This was later adjusted to a 'fulfilment theology' where there was often the expectation of an ingathering of Jews prior to the *parousia*.

6 Hosier, 'Israel and the Church' (unpublished paper, June 1994), 6f.

Your eschatology affects the way you build the church. If we have a concern for the Jews the best way to reach them is to build a glorious church - to provoke them to envy and to hasten the coming in of the full number of the Gentiles. And so all Israel will be saved.<sup>7</sup>

This focus on the church can be summarised under the following three headings:

- 1) an expectation that the church will become an effective demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10);
- 2) that the church will effectively communicate the Gospel to the diverse people groups (Matthew 24:14); and
- 3) the unity of the church will be expressed (Jesus prayer in John 17 and Paul's heart in Ephesians 4).

Hosier stated that it is the second point (the mission of the church) that must be fulfilled prior to the *parousia*; the other two points are goals that must be continually aimed at and there is no means by which they can be objectively measured. So, in NFI there is less emphasis on the maturity of the church prior to the *parousia* than is common within HCM circles. The Pauline description of the bride as being 'without spot or wrinkle' (Ephes. 5:25-27) has been used within HCM spheres to suggest that the church Jesus is returning for will be mature,<sup>8</sup> and, not surprisingly given their Reformed emphasis, Hosier sees such a claim as denying the imputed

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>8</sup> Turner, 'Ecclesiology', *Vox Evangelica*, Vol. XIX, 93.

righteousness of Christ.

For Hosier, and NFI, there is an expectation of an identifiable tribulation and a personal antichrist (who will be both a political and an ecclesiastical figure) prior to the *parousia*, thus a (classic) post-millennial position is not an option. Indeed, Hosier wondered whether there would even be a shift away from his 'positive a-millennialism' to historic pre-millennialism, particularly as 500 copies of Wayne Grudem's recently published *Systematic Theology*<sup>9</sup> were sold within a few hours of being publicly endorsed from the platform of the 1995 Stoneleigh Bible week.

NFI eschatology therefore is considerably less controversial: it is neither of the LRM-type nor does it adopt a post-millennialist position. Perhaps it is the emphasis on biblical teaching within NFI that has encouraged a more moderate approach, although it would be wrong to assume that the network is any less restorationist.

## **Salt and Light**

Barney Coombs, while pastoring Basingstoke Baptist Church was involved with the HCM from its early days. Later he developed links in North America with 'The Fort Lauderdale Five' and in particular with Baxter's colleague, Bob Mumford. As a result of that link there was a whole-hearted embracing of a model of one-to-one shepherding that was implemented in a very regimented and legalistic fashion. So one of their own writers, Ron Trudinger can say,

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<sup>9</sup> Downers Grove: IVP, 1994.

The leader, in his watching over and caring for the members deals directly with single men. He and his wife deal with single girls... Every man needs another man with delegated authority as a shepherd over his personal life. Every leader, then, himself needs a leader - a voice from God, we may say. From this we deduce that the head of any church himself needs an authority over his life. Such a "head over the head" may be local or he may be thousands of miles away. But the church leader submits to him as his authority.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly Wright can state rather negatively of Coombs' network that, 'It is the Basingstoke circle that have developed it [shepherding] most consistently and therefore, despite the overtly outward-looking attitude of these churches, they have been particularly prone to legalism, a sectarian ethos and an in-house group mentality.'<sup>11</sup>

As with most expressions within the HCM the above quote might well have been accurate at one time, but probably gives too negative a perspective in the current setting. Dave Richards, the leader of the Basingstoke church, for example, has been a welcome contributor both at Spring Harvest and to Evangelical Alliance working groups.

Salt and Light has been one of the prime movers in the

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<sup>10</sup>*Master Plan* (Basingstoke: Olive Tree Publications, 1980), 272-274.

<sup>11</sup>Wright 'Restoration', 5.

Christian Schools' scene in the UK, and it is perhaps the desire to build according to biblical principles that was source of the attraction toward Reconstructionism.<sup>12</sup>

However it would be false to label Salt and Light as Reconstructionist. In surveying a number of New Church members, although one person from Salt and Light acknowledged the Reconstructionist commentary on Revelation, *Days of Vengeance*, to be an influence on them, that same person did not adopt the post-millennial view put forward by the author, David Chilton.

In a paper that was commissioned for the Salt and Light network<sup>13</sup> the following points come through:

### **1. The twofold theme of triumph and apostasy**

While the New Testament teaches a rise in apostasy, it also teaches the increasing strength of the Kingdom. Nowhere, however, does the New Testament teach such an increase in apostasy that the Church is rendered ineffective but neither does it see a Church which is so victorious that evil is completely eradicated.

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<sup>12</sup>For research on the Christian Schools' movement, many of which are from restoration-based churches see Pamela MacKenzie's *A Critical Analysis of the Christian School Movement in England and Wales*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1994). Wright, *Restoring*, 5, notes the connection with Reconstructionism.

<sup>13</sup>The signatories of the paper, 'Towards Defining an Eschatology', are Mike Beaumont, Tony Gray, John Micklefield and Stephen Thomas and it is dated May 1987. The quotes under the headings that follow are directly from this paper.

## **2. A leaning toward a-millennialism**

We took the 1000 years to represent the rule of Christ and the saints in the Church age... We have dubbed this stance 'historic millennialism' - the reign of Christ is in present history.

## **3. A historicist interpretation on Revelation**

We take this third method [historicist] as the most satisfactory view of Revelation... History is viewed as a progressive and escalating conflict between a prophetic church assaulting the gates of hell and the spirit of anti-Christ which seeks to undermine and destroy it.

## **4. An increasing conflict**

Now the spirit of anti-Christ is at work and this opposition will grow and continue until the personification of that attitude appears as the Arch Persecutor of the Church. He will lead and steer the final humanistic Kingdom against God's people. Christ and the Kingdom... will win victory after victory and establish itself in the earth anticipating the personal return of Christ... In the context of a rising tide of wickedness the Kingdom and those in it will constantly overcome and rule.

Holding to this moderate position the writers clearly distance themselves from Reconstructionism, both implicitly and all-but explicitly with the words,

Both pre-millennialism and post-millennialism

view the Kingdom as earthly in form. We see scripture teaching that the Kingdom is heavenly and spiritual in its essential nature... Whenever in Church history men have sought to make it secular, disaster always ensued e.g. the post-Constantine Church; Calvin's Geneva; Cromwell's Commonwealth.<sup>14</sup>

The eschatology outlined in this paper is not in any way triumphalistic; at most it teaches an escalation of both good and evil and therefore the expectation of a triumphant church, although the authors are very clear that final triumph awaits the day when, 'Finally Christ Himself will break into history and will establish His victory completely over the face of the earth.'

## **Roger Forster and Ichthus Christian Fellowship**

Forster was involved with some of the early shapers of the HCM and is described by Walker as having 'one of the finest minds in the Evangelical constituency that I have ever encountered'; his work is 'welcome in Restoration Two, and admired in Restoration One'.<sup>15</sup> Although considerably less 'restorationist' in church

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<sup>14</sup>It needs to be noted that these are not good examples from the perspective of illustrating the millennial influence, as two of the three examples are a-millennial in viewpoint! Further, although pre-millennialism looks for an earthly kingdom, it is not secular as it is inaugurated by the return of Christ. However, in spite of the examples given, it clearly indicates the distancing of these authors from Reconstructionism.

<sup>15</sup>*Restoring*, 37.



structure, in the sense that there was an absence of 'buying into' the one-on-one discipleship and apostolic covering of churches when such teaching was in vogue, nevertheless the Ichthus movement is significant in the context of this thesis as Forster was involved from the beginning, holds to a restorationist view of church history and in many ways continues to hold to the eschatological teaching of the early-HCM.

Forster is a radical thinker and has always been willing to give a theological undergirding to many new practices. This can be seen in his defence of women in leadership, spiritual warfare or conditional immortality, to mention three specific areas.<sup>16</sup> With regard to church history, he has produced a tape series entitled 'Radical Church History', which has the underlying philosophy that the true church is always likely to have been the persecuted church, and therefore, rather than study mainline church history it is better to look at the persecuted (and at times, heretical) minority to understand where God has been at work. For Forster, the true church has always been 'inspirational' and has operated through a government of wisdom, while the mainline church has been 'institutional' and its government has been one of power. Such an approach means that the Montanists, Waldensians, Anabaptists, Quakers, Pentecostal and Charismatics all receive his positive endorsement. Essential to Forster, though, is not simply the rediscovery of some biblical pattern, but there capturing of a true apostolic anointing to take the gospel to the whole world in a generation.

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<sup>16</sup>Forster has published on all these areas and booklets are available from Ichthus Media Services.

The early HCM had a desire to recapture the nature of the New Testament church, whereas Forster was committed to help the church recapture the apostolic mission and mandate. In the early HCM the concept that the church would become glorious flourished; the church would be a city set on a hill, and then the world would come flocking to know the Christian God. Forster, however, viewed the church as salt that needed to be scattered throughout the world. Eschatologically, if Ephesians 4:11,12 and the restoration of the ministries was the essential text for the early HCM, Matthew 24:14 and the proclamation of the gospel to the nations has always been the central text for Forster. Obviously the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and it could be argued that they necessarily go hand-in-hand, yet the contrast is important to understand the motivating factor that lies behind the mission-orientated theology of Ichthus. Addressing the Pioneer network of church leaders Forster stated that 'world evangelism is the great motivation that lies behind eschatology'.<sup>17</sup>

In certain aspects of eschatology Forster is fairly conventional and shows an awareness of some of the finer points of exegesis, so, for example, he interprets the eschatological passage in Matthew chapter 24, essentially as per R.T. France<sup>18</sup> and others, paying

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<sup>17</sup>Statement recorded on the third in a tape series on Eschatology, February 1992. Further evidence of the mission-orientation of Forster is to note that Ichthus Christian Fellowship was the only 'local' church that was a member of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance: other members of the EMA were mission organisations.

<sup>18</sup>*Matthew* (Tyndale Commentary, Leicester: IVP, 1985), 333-

attention to the use of apocalyptic language, thus avoiding the errors normally produced by the literalism of some of the other schools. Yet there is another side to his hermeneutic which perhaps results from his Brethren background. There is a tendency to see the 'seeds' of a specific doctrine in less-than-clear Old Testament passages. Thus, he can find significance in the fact that there are 66 chapters in Isaiah the prophet and 66 books in the Bible, that there is a natural division at the end of chapter 39 which coincides with the number of Old Testament books.<sup>19</sup> As a memory aid this might be interesting and even helpful, but there appears to be an underlying interpretative principle being employed. Consequently he does not simply see the millennium taught in Revelation 20 but in the Old Testament passages of Daniel 7 and Isaiah 24:21-23; he suggests that the phrases 'a period of time' in Daniel 7:12, and 'shut up in a prison and be punished after many days' in Isaiah 24: 22, both refer to the millennial period.<sup>20</sup> This method means that a case is built up

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358. France distinguishes between the *parousia* and the fall of Jerusalem. The timing of the latter event is within the span of 'this generation', whereas regarding the return of Christ there is professed ignorance related to timing of that event. Similarly the signs relate, on the whole, to the fall of Jerusalem, not the *parousia*. Forster outlines an almost identical exegetical approach in his third tape on 'Eschatology' (Pioneer Direct, Feb. 1992).

19Outlined in his 'Bible Survey' tape series.

20The full text of Daniel 7:12 reads 'The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time' and Isaiah 24:21ff speaks of the powers in the heavens being punished 'in that day', that they will be bound

through the pages of the Scripture until the mature doctrine is exegeted from Revelation 20.

Although Old Testament texts are used to present an eschatology, it is in Forster's understanding of the book of Revelation that the distinctive eschatology becomes clear.<sup>21</sup>

### ***The overcoming remnant***

Forster sees the theme of an overcoming remnant as being the unifying theme of the book. Jesus is presented as the one who has overcome (Rev. 5:5) and there is therefore a call that comes to individuals within every church in every age to follow in his footsteps and also to overcome. This call is explicitly stated in the letters to the seven churches (chapters 2,3). The above framework is reasonably straightforward but Forster then places it in an 'end-time' eschatological setting, thus he suggests that 'the overcomers' are a remnant of the church that presses on in such a way that they successfully complete the task of world evangelisation.

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together and 'after many days' they are finally punished.

Forster understands both these passages to be speaking of the restraint placed on the angelic powers during the millennial rule, at the end of which they will experience final punishment. (Ichthus Media Services tape: 'The Millennium').

<sup>21</sup>The following material is drawn from Forster's three tape series on 'Eschatology' given to the Pioneer network of leaders in February 1992, and the undated tapes from Ichthus Media Services 'The Millennium' and 'World Mission in the Last Days'. (This last tape has a reference to 1989, clearly indicating that was the year it was recorded; I will refer to these as Eschatology 1, 2, 3; Millennium; World Mission.)

The release of this overcoming remnant is so important for Forster that he can state, 'without the overcomers there will not be a second coming'.<sup>22</sup> He both defines the overcomers and places them in an 'end of the age' setting with the following words:

As we move on to the end of the age the overcomers are a group of people that God draws out... A body of people who are learning to overcome... in order to be the kind of men and women that Jesus was and that Jesus intends us to be. And as they move on they are going to bring blessing to a fleshly, worldly and demonically oppressed church. And the overcomers are going to be a spearhead of blessing just as Abraham was to be blessed and to be a blessing... so as to bless the rest of the church and to get the rest of the church on the move... to bring the church to the fullness of the stature... They are part of God's strategy right from Genesis to Revelation to bring the universal blessing to everyone else.<sup>23</sup>

Reminiscent of G.H. Lang's teaching, Forster states that the 'overcomers are those who are counted worthy of the resurrection, to the out-resurrection of the dead. They are those who make it and leave others behind'.<sup>24</sup>

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22Eschatology 3.

23Eschatology 3.

24Eschatology 3. Following the emphasis of G.H. Lang, the use of 'out-resurrection of the dead' has significance for Forster. This phrase comes from Paul's use in Philippians 3:11 of the compound noun: *exanastasis*. He suggests that this is not a

It is this overcoming remnant that Forster maintains is the key to understanding the book and he suggests that they appear throughout Revelation but in different guises. So they are: the 144,000 that have been chosen by God and sealed (chapters 7 and 14); the two witnesses of chapter 11, described as the two lampstands, thus indicating that they are not the whole church but a significant minority of the whole who 'break through to bless others'; the manchild that is born to the woman in chapter 12; the firstfruits of the harvest in chapter 14; as well as those who share in the millennial rule of Christ upon the earth (chapter 20).<sup>25</sup>

### ***The fulfilment of world evangelisation***

If, for Forster, world evangelisation is the motivation behind eschatology it comes as no surprise that the task that lies before the overcomers is to press through with their witness. 'World evangelism is a one-generation task' and the overcomers will be the generation that has finally fulfilled the task and therefore sees the return of Christ. The picture of the two witnesses who have 'finished their testimony' (Rev. 11:7) is descriptive of the proclamation of the gospel to all nations, resulting in a

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description of the general resurrection, but of a partial resurrection (*ex-*) of overcomers, a resurrection that is only available for those who are counted worthy to reign with Christ in the millennial period. This understanding, coupled with a pre-millennial framework of Revelation 20, becomes the basis on which to interpret the phrase 'the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended', as describing a partial resurrection of the overcomers.

final great harvest. Once they have finished their task the final (seventh) trumpet can be sounded.

As with G.H. Lang, the overcomers are the firstfruit company whose activity precipitates the harvest of the ages. They are those who 'pioneer their way through with a view that there will be masses, masses in heaven' for when they accomplish world mission they will 'open the door for God to pour out his Spirit even when antichrist is in the place of ascendancy, and in comparison to the firstfruits there will be a great harvest'.<sup>26</sup>

### ***An outcome of martyrdom***

Although the overcomers are successful in their witness the outcome of their witness is martyrdom. This is seen in the killing of the two witnesses (11:7); the raising of the manchild to the throne of God (12:4f.); and in the judgement that comes on the woman who drunk the blood of the saints (17:6). This, Forster maintains, is the means by which God will destroy his enemies - they will become intoxicated with the wine of the martyrs' blood, whose 'blood is of the same kind as that of Jesus and will not be wasted'. It is clear that he does not mean that the blood of the martyrs is in any way redemptive but that their blood releases judgement upon Babylon and God's saving activity for repentant humanity. These overcoming martyrs 'throw their lives into the pot for God' so that 'as fast as they are being martyred there will be those springing up into their place'.<sup>27</sup>

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26World Harvest.

27World Harvest.

For Forster this current age was initiated through the blood of Jesus, but will be culminated through the blood of the martyrs. A triumphant church, then, is not one that 'christianises' the nations but one that follows the Lamb of God even into death: only such a church can precipitate the end. Post-millennialism is obviously not an option for Forster!

### ***A strongly pre-millennial perspective***<sup>28</sup>

Forster is adamantly pre-millennial for a number of reasons. Exegetically he follows the line taken by G.E. Ladd, insisting that the verb *ezesan* can only mean physical resurrection in both verse 4 and verse 5 of Revelation chapter 20, and so there is a physical resurrection for some (the overcomers) at the beginning of the millennium, which coincides with the binding of Satan, while the 'rest of the dead' only come to life at the end of this millennial period.<sup>29</sup>

He also puts forward the pre-millennial viewpoint as being the only one that does justice to a doctrine of creation. In his tape on the millennium Forster begins with the creation account and the 'great trouble that God took to make the earth', suggesting that both the post and a-millennial viewpoints hold out a 'purely spiritual' hope for the future; hope for this earth as expressed in pre-millennialism is, for Forster, the only viable view in the light of creation. He states that:

The millennium is the future of this earth

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<sup>28</sup>All quotes are from Forster's tape 'The Millennium'.

<sup>29</sup>Ladd argues his case in *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 265-267.



brought to its proper end that God intended for it. It is now groaning and in travail (Romans chapter eight) waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. When the sons of God will be manifested, and the son of God manifested I am sure with them (some people think that one happens before the other, but I won't go into that) the time will come when from the manifestation of the sons of God, the whole earth will enter into this lovely period and will enjoy the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. So if we are enjoying liberty and glory now, the universe will get it then and we will serve the universe with our liberty and glory.<sup>30</sup>

The third reason why the millennium is of great import to Forster is that those who have overcome will be rewarded during the millennial period. The millennium is for all those who have not worshipped the beast and have resisted the antichrist spirit; it is for all who have been 'martyr-style' overcomers. 'Training for reigning' is a phrase that is used often within Ichthus: discipleship in the current era is related to the exercise of rule that the saints will experience in the millennial period. Learning to deal with spiritual forces in this age is vital as the millennial age is not subjected to 'principalities and powers' but is ruled over by redeemed humanity.<sup>31</sup> It is in the millennial period that the overcoming saints are

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<sup>30</sup>His comment that some people suggest that the 'manifestation of the sons of God' takes place before Jesus himself is manifested is an oblique reference to LRM teaching on 'sonship'. He distances himself from this LRM perspective in this quote.

rewarded and will be given administration over segments of the earth, for, 'we will reign with him if we have endured with him. That [the millennium] is largely the time in which it will be expressed.'<sup>32</sup> So Forster encourages a reaching out for the kingdom now for 'as much of the kingdom that we have embraced in this age we can take into the millennial age'.<sup>33</sup>

Forster can even make the suggestion that eternity itself is divided into segments of time (eternity being the age of ages – *ho aion tou aionos*) of which the millennium becomes the first segment. He then puts forward the idea that the millennium might well have the very practical purpose of preparing us for the radical transformation of the age to come. Practically, then, the millennium becomes a suitable transition age which

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31Forster has been influential in bringing teaching on 'spiritual warfare' and the role of heavenly beings in ruling the affairs of humanity on the earth (see, for example, his foreword to Peter Wagner (ed.), *Territorial Spirits* (Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991)). These spiritual powers must be 'brought to heel' by the church so that they obey the purposes of God. This is part of the church's training so that the saints can reign effectively in the age to come. Throughout the tape on the millennium there is a (convenient?) confusion of the age to come with that of the millennium, so the use of Heb. 2:5 and its reference to 'the world to come' becomes a reference to the millennial period and not to the new heavens and new earth of the age to come. Forster's accusations that the a- and post-millennial views are purely spiritual are only effective if there is an expectation of some non-earthly spiritual existence post-*parousia* rather than a bodily existence in a renewed earth.

32World Mission.

33The Millennium.

prepares us for all that lies beyond.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Summary of Ichthus eschatology***

Throughout the centuries there has been a need for an overcoming remnant, God's 'shock troops', to press through with a radical form of discipleship and give themselves to evangelise the world. When such a generation rises up in the end-times (characterised by the first 3½ years of Revelation 11:3) and fulfils the requirement of effectively evangelising the world there will also be great opposition and many of their company will be martyred. Subsequent to this martyrdom there will be the ascendancy of antichrist and horrific persecution (characterised by the second period of 3½ years in Revelation 12:6), although even during this period there will continue to be 'masses turning to the Lord'.<sup>35</sup> The 'end-times' then are characterised by increasing tension between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, with the return of Christ ushering in the millennial period.

The influence of G.H. Lang is evident in much of this eschatology, with the distinctive Ichthus element being the commitment to evangelism and the very real expectation that to follow Christ means the increasing likelihood of martyrdom. Ichthus' vision statement underlines the commitment to their eschatology:

We aim to contribute to the completion of world evangelisation in our generation by planting and growing churches which make disciples of

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<sup>34</sup>The Millennium.

<sup>35</sup>Eschatology 3.

Jesus through the whole gospel of words, works and wonders, being ourselves committed to being of one heart and soul.<sup>36</sup>

Inevitably there is diversity within the distinct streams themselves but in looking briefly at one of those other networks, Pioneer, it is worth noting that the influence of Forster extends beyond Ichthus.

## **Pioneer**

Forster has not only been very influential on the early HCM theology but continues to influence. Perhaps it is the Pioneer stream that he has influenced the greatest. Through the involvement of Ichthus with Pioneer (and Youth with a Mission) in the running of 'March for Jesus', Forster has had a great opportunity to influence Coates and those associated with him. Beyond that association, Forster has had occasion to help shape Pioneer's eschatology: he has since the inception of Pioneer's national leadership training programme been the one who has taught on eschatology,<sup>37</sup> he addressed the Pioneer network on eschatology in February 1992 on three consecutive evenings, the tapes having been subsequently marketed by Pioneer; and Coates himself has acknowledged that it is Forster who shaped his

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<sup>36</sup>'Celebration' magazine (Ichthus Christian Fellowship, Autumn 1995) 3.

<sup>37</sup>This course began in 1990 and by the 1995/96 year had over 1200 students go through it. Forster taught two sessions per year with approximately 65% of the students being leaders within the Pioneer network.

theology.<sup>38</sup>

At the time of writing Pioneer had within its leadership, Noble and Lyne of the original seven that met with Wallis from 1972, as well other early influential figures within the HCM such as Coates and Pullin. Their presence, along with Forster's influence, means that the LRM / early-HCM-type eschatology of firstfruits / manchild continues.<sup>39</sup> However, it is also appropriate to note that Pioneer is probably typical of other streams with a diversity of eschatological views being currently held.

### **Bridge Ministries<sup>40</sup>**

Bristol Christian Fellowship is the central church in a network of churches known as Bridge Ministries. Latterly it has been led by Dave Day, but previously was led for a number of years by Peter Lyne, one of the original seven that Wallis called together in 1972, until he left to work in New Zealand. Throughout the 1970s and 80s the input of Graham Perrins and John MacLauchlan, along with Fulness magazine, were the main eschatological influences and the corresponding eschatology could be classified as being typical of the early HCM. During the later years of the 1980s Lloyd

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38Coates, *The Vision* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1995), 9, states that 'Particular credit must go to... Roger Forster who gave me a theology on which I could hang my prophetic spirit.'

39As has been already specifically noted in chapter 4 above with the Nobles' book.

40The information on Bridge Ministries was obtained from a telephone interview with Dave Day on 12/12/95.

Pietersen was responsible for the theological input to the network and through his teaching, G.E. Ladd's theology on the kingdom helped to modify any sense of triumphalism. Also in this later period there was some minimal contact with Reconstructionism, mainly through a speaker called Dennis Peacocke, although they even had the 'founder' of Reconstructionism, Rushdoony, address a one-off leaders' day in Bristol.

Similar to a number of the streams, eschatology is not something which has been majored on in recent years; more practical issues have been the focus, but Day suggested that the current position was one which leaned toward pre-millennialism, although he was 'very much open to the possibility of being surprised'. A commitment to a vision of the church developing toward maturity is still present but any triumphalism of the past has been tempered through such life-experiences as ongoing sickness, in spite of a belief in God's ability to heal.

The experience of Bridge Ministries is probably fairly typical of many of the HCM streams: any earlier triumphalism has waned and more practical issues have been addressed. Indeed in surveying a number of people across a diversity of streams I have discovered that there is little directly taught on eschatology.<sup>41</sup>

Through examining the historical development and diversification of HCM-eschatology we are now at a

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<sup>41</sup>The one major exception to this is Ichthus; the only group that did not respond to the survey was Covenant Ministries, which I suspect would be more proactive in disseminating its (predominantly) post-millennial teaching.

point where it can be analysed and critiqued. It is to this that we must now turn our attention.

# Chapter 7

## Categorising HCM Eschatology

Having looked at the development of HCM eschatology it has become evident that a single eschatological outlook does not exist. This is in spite of the popular perspective that reduces HCM eschatology to that of a post-millennial, triumphalistic viewpoint. This perspective is reflected by Patricia Higton in *Prophecy Today*:

It is not widely known that the major strands of new churches ('house churches') in Britain, date their emergence back to a meeting at which Arthur Wallis and many who are now household names in UK renewal circles, met to discuss eschatology – the doctrine of the 'Last Things'. They decided to reject a particular view called dispensationalism, prevalent in Brethren circles, and adopted 'post-millennialism' [*sic*]... This particular view led to an emphasis on 'Kingdom Now', on the church ushering in the reign of Christ on earth; believing that Jesus will only return after this has been accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

At best Higton has simplified the discussions, and at worst misrepresented what took place in the developing

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1 'The Second Coming and the Kingdom' *Prophecy Today*, Vol. 10.3, (May / June 1994), 30.



HCM. Although it is true that Wallis convened such a meeting to discuss eschatology, it was the nature of prophetic ministry that became the central issue of discussion;<sup>2</sup> dispensationalism was rejected but some time prior to this meeting; and postmillennialism was only adopted by some within the HCM (the R1-strand) but at a later date than indicated (and certainly not by 1972, the date of the meeting that is referred to).

Another example of the simplification of HCM eschatology comes from the pen of a former-HCM leader, Peter Fenwick. And due to his former position it is worthwhile quoting him in full. Discussing the rise of Restorationism against the background of Dispensational pessimism, Fenwick states:

Restorationism came presenting an absolutely opposite view of the church, and taught that the church would in this age, and before the return of Jesus, become overwhelmingly successful in every area of human life. In particular this meant that the church would overwhelm the secular world, not by military means, but by the force of righteousness. The church's influence would be so massive and extensive that it would dominate government, education, business and finance, the judiciary, law

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2 Wallis' son states that 'it soon became clear that the Holy Spirit was leading them in a way they had not expected. It is true that they did receive some insight into the nature of prophecy, but the main emphasis was on the person of the prophet. God was speaking to them about men and ministries rather than doctrines; about relationships rather than theories.' (Arthur, 201.)

enforcement, the arts etc. This did not mean that there would necessarily be a Christian political party in Parliament; that would not be necessary. The church would be seen to be so glorious in wisdom and righteousness that government and political leaders everywhere would come to it for counsel and advice. Education planners and captains of industry as well as leaders in other fields of human activity would all in similar fashion be accepting the church's standards and the church's direction for their affairs. The righteous rule of Christ which is foretold following the return of Christ to the earth would be in a very large measure realised before his return.<sup>3</sup>

Although he suggests that 'Restorationism does not have the same dominant place in the [new] churches today as it had then',<sup>4</sup> his reflection of Restorationist beliefs is an extreme interpretation of what had been said (I strongly suspect) by the likes of Baxter at the Dales' Bible weeks.<sup>5</sup>

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3 Clifford Hill with Peter Fenwick, David Forbes, David Noakes, 'The Roots of the Toronto Blessing' in *Blessing the Church* (Guildford: Eagle, 1995), 45.

4 Ibid., 47f.

5 Fenwick states 'The expectations amongst the people of God were quite enormous and they would return in their thousands from the great Bible weeks fully expecting to see progress within the following months.' (Ibid., 47.) Fenwick is referring to the 1970s and early 1980s (p. 46) and was in attendance at Dales' weeks when Baxter was present.

The type of Restorationism that Fenwick is reflecting could only be described as an extreme post-millennialist form, much more akin to Reconstructionism than to the eschatology that has been generally taught within the HCM. (Although this is not to deny the possibility of either, a) the above extreme having been taught in some limited circles or, b) that Baxter's teaching had been interpreted to imply the outworking as outlined by Fenwick.)

Walker is somewhat more accurate in his assessment of HCM eschatology. Although he quotes David Matthew (from Covenant Ministries) as foreseeing 'the day when politicians and workers of the world come to kingdom people cap in hand',<sup>6</sup> he does not project post-millennial views on to Restorationism as a whole. Indeed he is clear that millennial views are not too significant a factor in classifying HCM eschatology. So he states:

The Restorationist adventism is essentially pre-millennial but millennialism is not an essential theme in their vision of the last things. Christ will return when the Church is perfect and the kingdom restored. He will come as king and take his rightful place... I think most Restorationists think there will be a gap between the return of the king, and the 'full restoration of all things' in eternity. The essential thrust of their adventism, however, is the establishment of a mighty kingdom of God

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<sup>6</sup> Walker, *Restoring*, 135f, quoting a personal conversation that took place in September 1984.

prior to the return of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

Walker claims that it is the pre-millennial viewpoint that dominates within the HCM<sup>8</sup> and it is interesting to compare, and contrast, his comments with those of Wright in *Themelios* who chooses his words carefully but uses the term post-millennial to categorise HCM eschatology. Wright describes the HCM's eschatology as a 'rejection of pessimistic pre-millennialism in favour of a form of post-millennialism which expected the restoring of the church to its NT pattern to be accompanied by a massive and final revival as the immediate prelude to the coming of Christ.'<sup>9</sup>

Walker and Wright are both seeking to say the same thing: one describes HCM eschatology as 'a form of post-millennialism', the other as 'essentially pre-millennial', and provided either description is qualified these are not all-together inaccurate statements, although both remain inadequate. What becomes clear is that HCM eschatology cannot be simplified by reducing it to some millennial category. Indeed expressing HCM eschatology in millennial terms yields the following picture:

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7 Walker, *Restoring*, 137.

8 Walker's comments are more related to the period up until the mid-1970s; his comments would be less true for the R1 stream after that date.

9 'Restoration', *Themelios* 16.2, 7.

| LRM-type<br>pre-<br>millennial | Historic pre-<br>millennial | A-millennial           | Post-<br>Millennial    |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Ichthus                        |                             | New Frontiers          | Covenant<br>Ministries |
| <-----Pioneer----->            |                             |                        |                        |
|                                |                             | <----Salt & Light----> |                        |

The above table suggests the leanings of the various strands but should not be seen as water-tight compartments, and perhaps they should be seen as the leanings of the diverse groups, particularly noting Walker's warning that the movement cannot essentially be classified according to traditional millennial categories. Given the limitations of the above table, it can be noted that HCM eschatology can almost cover the full spectrum from an all-but Reconstructionist-type millennialism, through to the pre-millennialism associated with Anabaptism. Indeed those two opposing perspectives suggest that there are divergent hopes within the HCM for their relationship with society at large: some lean toward a hope of impacting society through legislation and influence, others expect the church to remain as an alternative faith community with minimal impact on the structures of society.<sup>10</sup> The only

<sup>10</sup>This overall thesis has sought to demonstrate that the ecclesiology has shaped the eschatology; as other beliefs and practices gain prominence they might easily cause a new emphasis to come through in the eschatology. One such

firm conclusion that can be made is that it is only the Dispensationalist variation of premillennialism that is absent from the HCM.

## **Excursus: the pre-millennial beliefs within the HCM**

Although millennialism is not a good category to use in defining HCM eschatology, the specific type of pre-millennialism that is advocated is worth noting, particularly as this viewpoint was historically the main HCM position. Exegetically, a pre-millennial view was maintained, yet there are deeper reasons for holding to the position than exegesis. Graham Perrins suggests three main purposes to the millennium and therefore why a millennium is necessary:<sup>11</sup>

1) A millennial rule will demonstrate the visible rule of Christ in the sphere of his rejection. Given that God outworks his purposes within history and so the same scene that saw Christ's humiliation and rejection must see his vindication and glorification. Perrins maintains that Paul also gives a millennial perspective with the words, 'For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death' (1 Corinthians 15:25f). The last enemy is destroyed after the millennial rule,<sup>12</sup> therefore the

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notable belief could be that of aggressive 'spiritual warfare' as adopted by the (among others) Anabaptist-type Ichthus movement. This is explored briefly in a later chapter.

11Taken from his tape of May 1988, 'The Millennium', (Springwood Tapes).

12Perrins uses Rev. 20:7-14 with the framework of 'When the

millennium itself is the period when the enemies are brought to subjection, through the reign of Christ with the saints. For Perrins if there is no millennium the victory of Christ will not be expressed within history and within the sphere of his rejection.

2) A millennium rule is needed in order to manifest the sons of God as indicated in Romans 8:19.<sup>13</sup> The reign of Christ will display his sovereignty in and through his saints, so the millennium will not only be the vindication of Christ but also of the church.

3) It is during the millennium that the saints will be rewarded for their faithfulness. The promise to the overcomers is that they will exercise authority with Christ (e.g. Revelation 2:26-28), and it is during the millennium and as a result of the first resurrection that they will exercise such a rule. The promises are for the overcomers, and Perrins is silent on the fate of those who have not overcome, but the strong implication is that only those who have overcome will share in the millennium / first resurrection. Eventually all are raised but some will be raised before others and as evidence of this he draws on three Scriptures: the firstfruits / harvest analogy in Revelation; Luke 20:35 and the mention of those who were considered worthy of the resurrection; along with Paul's desire to participate in the resurrection (Phil. 3:10ff.). The influence of G.H. Lang on Perrins can be clearly seen in this approach.

thousand years are over... then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.'

13By stating the manifestation of the sons of God in this way he distances himself from the more extreme LRM position of teaching that the manifestation occurs prior to the *parousia*.

The distinctive HCM element is the reward aspect with the very real possibility for some Christians of not being raised in the first resurrection, in spite of being in Christ. The reward is sharing in the millennial rule of Christ, and this reward is reserved for those who have been counted worthy.

Such a pre-millennial perspective approaches Revelation from an essentially futurist interpretation of the book. For Perrins this means that the book describes not only a growth in the church but also an increase in evil, so a post-millennial triumphalism ruled out. The church will be in warfare right up to the parousia and the end of that conflict will only come through the return of Christ. By way of contrast Covenant Ministries essentially approach the book from the preterist perspective with judgement being past, particularly relating to the sack of Jerusalem (thus following, and being influenced, by the early dating and line given by the Reconstructionist, David Chilton, in his commentary).<sup>14</sup>

In spite of two differing millennial viewpoints the interpretation of the verses quoted above from 1 Corinthians 15 have something in common; Perrins, from a pre-millennial perspective, and Covenant Ministries (following the post-millennial interpretation of Baxter) both see the rule of Christ defeating every enemy, except death, through the church, prior to the end. Both then hold that Paul is teaching a progression within a millennial period of the defeat of Christ's

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<sup>14</sup>There might well be those who do not accept this view point within Covenant Ministries as the statement can only be taken as a generalisation.



enemies.

## **End of Excursus**

Addressing the ‘restoration movement’ Nigel Wright wrote that, ‘The restoration movement does not speak with one voice but it does speak the same language’,<sup>15</sup> and with regard to the millennium views within the HCM have diversified, and yet there remains the shared belief in the restoration of the church. This belief can be expressed post-millennially with the church increasing its impact in society, or pre-millennially with the church successfully discharging its mandate of preaching the gospel to ‘all nations’ and yet suffering martyrdom in the process. Undergirding both approaches is that of a mature church being successful in its mission – the divergence takes place as to how that success is interpreted.

## **The Church and Restoration**

Restoration is the common belief among all HCM streams and the effects of this restoration are outworked church-wise in three dimensions: the church coming to maturity, the church expressing unity, and the church successfully discharging her mission.

### ***The church and maturity***

Restorationists all interpret church history from the distinctive perspective that the church had moved progressively away from the expression of NT

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<sup>15</sup>*The Radical Kingdom* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1986), 75.

Christianity ever since the first generation apostolic church, to an all time low through the middle ages until the Reformation.

From then there had been a consistent restoration of NT Christianity.<sup>16</sup> A significant sign that this restoration was nearing its completion was the arrival of 'apostles' on the modern church scene. John Noble expressed this view when he wrote:

[D]uring the last four centuries, at the close of this age, the winds of light and revelation are blowing again as strongly as ever... These surges of blessing began their inward trek when the great Bible translators set to work, risking their lives to bring the word of God to the masses in a language they would understand. This quickly led to the opening up of a succession of glorious truths, such as justification by faith, holiness, social responsibility, the priesthood of all believers, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and lately the truth concerning the body of Christ and the structure of the church. It does not require a great deal of study to see that the progress of this renewal is similar to that of the decline in reverse. In the past three or four centuries we have recovered much of the ground that was lost... Now in terms of recovery, what was first to disappear will be last to reappear in order that the heavenly programme may be

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<sup>16</sup>In Appendix 2 of this thesis I seek to show that a belief in 'restoration' is not unique to the HCM: there is an inherent desire to see one's involvement in something as significant.

completed... at last His people are being prepared again to receive apostolic ministry which will lay the foundations of the latter house, the glory of which will exceed that of the first.<sup>17</sup>

Such a viewpoint is not unique to the HCM, indeed in measure most non-conformist groups have developed due to a belief that they were the ones who had received new insight from the Spirit via Scripture. And although Pentecostals have on the whole, subscribed to a Dispensationalist approach, they too have seen themselves specifically as participating within a restorationist framework. Larry McQueen quotes from *The Upper Room*, January 1911 issue:

No doubt in the early apostolic days, when the Gospel was preached, salvation was preached in its fullness, and when the Holy Ghost was preached, as on the day of Pentecost, it included nothing less than the full baptism. However, very much of Gospel truth was lost when the church lost its original purity and power and became linked to the world until 'the dark ages' set in. Since that time the full truth has only been restored to us by degrees, justification by faith through Luther and the Reformation, sanctification through George Fox, the Wesleys etc. In the latter days the precious truths of Divine healing and the near personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ have

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<sup>17</sup>*First Apostles Last Apostles* (Romford: private publication, 1973).

been given to the church. And now, in the Latter Rain, the full Pentecost is being manifested and poured out upon humble waiting disciples as of yore.<sup>18</sup>

For modern day Restorationists, Ephesians 4 with its emphasis on apostles is one of the key texts; for the early Pentecostals it was to the book of Joel that they turned. Aimee Semple McPherson, in a published sermon entitled 'Lost and Restored', used Joel 1:4 typologically to describe the loss of apostolic Christianity in four stages and Joel 2:25 to describe the recovery of apostolic Christianity; the recovery process thus reversing the order by which such a Christianity had been lost. Both the NT church and the restored church she described as the 'Perfect Church'.<sup>19</sup>

Commenting on early Pentecostal eschatology McQueen states that, 'it was the outpouring of the Spirit which signaled the beginning of the last days for the early church as well as the end of the last days for the early Pentecostals. Pentecostal eschatology finds its source in the presence of the eschatological Spirit.'<sup>20</sup> In similar vein Kenneth Archer writes, 'Pentecostalism perceived itself as a revival movement that called the

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18 *Joel and the Spirit*, (Sheffield: SAP, 1995), 83, quoting The Upper Room 2.4, p. 2. For further evidence of this perspective within Pentecostalism see Appendix 1.

19 A.S. McPherson, *Lost and Found* (Los Angeles: The Foursquare Bookshop, 1970), 23-25. The four stages were the consecutive destruction through the 'palmerworm', the 'locust', the 'cankerworm' and the 'caterpillar'.

20 McQueen, *Joel*, 97.

church to relive the apostolic experiences'; the time was short for 'they viewed this Holy Spirit outpouring as the final act in the drama of salvation'.<sup>21</sup> As with the HCM, Pentecostals were trained to read Scripture 'by their restorationist heritage' which 'gave them the sense that they were the contemporary manifestation of the 'last days' community founded in Acts'.<sup>22</sup>

The Pentecostal movement interpreted the outpouring of the Spirit as an empowerment to spread the Gospel; their mission then was to 'save souls' so that as many as possible might participate in the rapture. Pentecostalism, like many aspects of Western evangelicalism, has been individualistic: with an emphasis on personal testimonies and personal reception of the Spirit, and other-worldly: emphasising salvation as going to heaven and gifts of the Spirit as supernatural (or unnatural?) endowments. As such little thought was given to a radical ecclesiology, thus Dispensationalism remained unchallenged. Although sharing a common restorationist belief, the HCM, however, began with an ecclesiology that proved to be incompatible with Dispensationalism.

Beyond the modern examples of Pentecostalism and the HCM there tends to be a common theme among all those who claim a fresh experience of the Spirit, that theme being a heightened awareness of the imminence of the end, and an often accompanied belief in the significance of the group that has received the Spirit.

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21 'Pentecostal Hermeneutics', *JPT* 8, 64.

22 Joel Shuman, 'Pentecost and the end of Patriotism', *JPT* 9, 90.

Such traits are seen in the Montanists and the Catholic Apostolic Church of Edward Irving, to mention but two such 'charismatic' sects; and within the Jewish context, the Qumran sect exhibited similar beliefs in its own importance in the scheme of restoration.

Such a realisation puts HCM claims into focus; they are not simply making a new claim, merely a new focus on ecclesiology and specifically with the restoration of apostolic ministry: hence the centrality of Ephesians 4:11-15. It is this belief in the restoration of the apostolic and prophetic ministries that is the distinctive HCM contribution (although the Apostolic church and the LRM both advocated the present-day existence of apostles, with the latter espousing a specifically restorationist belief).

### ***The unity of the church***

The prayer of Jesus 'that they might be one' (John 17) has been seen as key to an understanding of the future of the church. Although the HCM is sectarian from a sociological perspective,<sup>23</sup> there is a strong underlying

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<sup>23</sup>Walker, *Restoring*, 217-223. Perhaps a definition of sect that works well with the HCM is that of L.M. White in 'Shifting Sectarian Boundaries in Early Christianity', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 70, 1988, p. 14. He states that a sect is a 'deviant or separatist movement within a cohesive and religiously defined dominant culture. Thus, despite expressed hostilities and exclusivism, the sect shares the basic constellation of beliefs and "worldview" of the dominant cultural idiom'. In similar vein J. Blenkinsopp stated that a sect 'also claims in a more or less exclusive way to be what the parent body claims to be' ('Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism: An Aspect of Second Temple History' in E.P.

belief in the future visible unity of the church. This vision does not flow from an ecumenical vision, but from a two-fold belief: 1) that the prayer of Jesus will be answered, and 2) that the ministry gifts of Ephesians 4 are to bring the church to 'the unity of the faith'.

Wright sums up this particular aspect of HCM theology, stating that:

If there is such a hope it is not rooted in the church itself but in the prayer of Jesus for the church that it might be done (John 17) and in the vision of the church as a bride adorned for the coming of the Lord (Revelation 19:7). Only God can bring this about and the testimony of Scripture is such that we are entitled to hope for its fulfilment.<sup>24</sup>

Later he expands on the expectation stating that,

The expectation of John was that Christ would be coming for a bride prepared and ready for him, that the bride would have made herself ready for her Lord. Since the church in her present condition can hardly be described in this way, this suggests that there is yet work to do. Of most significance in this regard is the prayer of Jesus... This prayer had not been fulfilled. It is reasonable to expect that the prayer of Jesus will be answered and it was clearly intended to be fulfilled in history as a

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Sanders (ed), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* Vol. II, London: SPCK, 1981, p. 1).

<sup>24</sup>*Radical*, 143.

witness to an unbelieving world.<sup>25</sup>

Although the unity is visible and historical, the nature of this unity 'will be organic rather than organisational, spontaneous rather than forced, God-given rather than humanly engineered.'<sup>26</sup>

How the vision toward unity is outworked will be a critical issue that the HCM will face, particularly given that it is a sectarian movement. Forster's model of firstfruits / harvest is one way: a significant minority of the whole church will come to maturity first, which then through tribulation and a fresh release of the Holy Spirit the remainder of the church will come into the same experience and therefore unity. The post-millennial approach exercises a strong belief in God at work within the church and inevitably loses any sense of an imminent return (if one lives with the reality of the extent of division that exists among Christians). Wright challenges the ever-present tendency in a sect toward superiority and triumphalism, with the model that any new truth revealed is simply held in trust by that group / sect for the whole, and by so doing he effectively challenges any arrogance. He writes:

If this movement [HCM] is to be true to the principle upon which it is founded – the recovery of the New Testament vision of the church - it must remove from its life every tendency in this direction and see itself not as the finest expression of church life which can

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<sup>25</sup>ibid., 184.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., 183.



be found but as the servant of the whole body of Christ with which, whether we like it or not, we are all indissolubly joined.<sup>27</sup>

The HCM then with its vision toward unity has a key issue to face, namely the model by which this unity will be outworked. By nature of its foundations, the HCM does not expect an organisational unity and its attitude towards denominational situations can vary somewhat: from a dismissal of them as all but 'Babylonish' to an acceptance of their validity but a definite opposition to denominationalism. So Wallis can write that it is vital 'that our church structures conform to the New Testament', and that a 'church is not fully renewed if the structures are left untouched'.<sup>28</sup> Such statements can sound as a call to abandon a denomination, but Wallis does not approach the subject so simplistically as it is a loyalty to a denomination rather than membership of the denomination that he objects to. He states:

Provided a believer is convinced that his membership of a local church is in the will of God he should always be encouraged to be loyal to that local body of believers. But often, behind the 'stay-in' call, there is something more than this - an appeal to denominational loyalty. Since denominations have no biblical basis we are skating on thin ice when we appeal for that kind of loyalty.<sup>29</sup>

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27Ibid., 144.

28*The Radical Christian* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1981), 85,87.

29Ibid., 125.

Perhaps an even stronger indication of an opposition to denominational loyalty rather than an opposition to denominations as such can be found in Noble's book, *House Churches will they survive?*.<sup>30</sup> In his opening chapter entitled, 'Rocket or Fuel Tank?' he writes:

I guess there are some folks who have already assumed that I'm writing off all the denominations and every historic tradition in one fell swoop! Well I'm not... I've learned to take care not to write off anything or anyone. It seems to me that just when we begin to feel a situation is so beyond the pale that God could not possibly bless or use it again, he steps in and proves us wrong... He's in the business of reclamation and has a couple of legions of angels out searching for old fuel tanks. They have strict instructions not to ditch anything unless they are absolutely sure it's unusable.<sup>31</sup>

A belief in unity is not unique to the HCM, but the belief in unity must be set alongside that of the church growing to maturity. The hope is not for a unity at the level of the lowest common denominator, but an ultimate unity that is based on the 'unity of the faith'. If a genuine commitment to non-denominationalism is followed through there is the possibility of geographical unity,<sup>32</sup> however this could be counteracted through an

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<sup>30</sup>Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1988.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 19,21.

<sup>32</sup>The concept of one church in the city or locality is a concept that has been a HCM theme from the earliest days. It has recently been advanced again in a publication by John Hosier

over-commitment to the specific apostolic stream that is identified with. Those who are sceptical of HCM agendas can legitimately ask whether a commitment to a specific apostolic team will simply become a new sectarian commitment to denominationalism.

### ***Successful discharge of its mission: the Gospel to the nations***

This has always been the main emphasis within Ichthus, but has increasingly become the rallying call for most HCM streams. Essentially based on Matthew 24:14 the belief is that the end can only come when 'all nations' have been witnessed to through the church.<sup>33</sup> The belief that the return of Christ can only occur after the proclamation of the gospel to all the people groups of the earth is not exclusive to the HCM. Stanley Grenz, a Baptist scholar, states that although the historical process is open, God calls us to 'participate in history' and be 'agents in his historical work', as we work 'toward the advance of God's programme in the world'.<sup>34</sup>

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& Tom Poulson, *The Unity of the Local Church* (Kent for Christ, 1994). Another recent emphasis on unity in an area is the teaching and publications from Argentina, for example Ed Silvano's book *That None Should Perish* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1994). This teaching, on one church in a city with city wide united prayer gatherings, has been introduced particularly through a connection with Ichthus.

33The term *ta ethne* in Matthew 24:14 has tended to be understood along modern missiological lines as all people (ethnic) groups, rather than as a reference to the offer of the Gospel to the non-Jewish community.

34*Theology for the Community of the Spirit* (Carlisle:

One key means of hastening that day is through a zeal in worldwide evangelism for,

the Lord intended to instill confidence in his followers to fulfil a mandate under his authority. Jesus promised that the church will complete its task of carrying the good news throughout the world. Our awareness of his promise ought to produce in us zealous involvement in the evangelism mandate. We can commit ourselves to proclaiming the gospel because we are confident that the Holy Spirit will accomplish this task through us before the end comes.<sup>35</sup>

If one believes that specific events must take place prior to the *parousia* this emphasis on proclamation must be one of the healthiest positions to take, as it guides people away from speculation about events preceding the end to profitable activity. It certainly appears to be in line with Jesus' response to the disciples in Acts 1:6-8.

Again it can be noted that the outworking of such a belief can embrace diverse expectations: it can be expressed post-millennially with a visible expression of success, or pre-millennially even where the majority of the church is martyred.

## **Excursus on the HCM and Israel**

HCM eschatology is often criticised as being triumphalistic with a second strand of criticism being its

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Paternoster, 1994), 809.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 852.

stance on Israel and a (supposed) espousal of replacement theology. So David Noakes can write:

Pride, and its accompanying desire for power and dominion, all too easily opens the door to false doctrine. Taken together with the vital ingredient of the deep root of anti-Semitism, the largely unadmitted and unrepented sin of the Gentile church through so many generations, pride has opened the way for the doctrines of Dominion theology and for the false concepts of Restorationism and Reconstructionism.

The rejection of the clear and unambiguous teaching of Scripture concerning the continuing part which the nation of Israel has to play in the purposes of God throws away a vital key to a biblical understanding of the significance of the times in which we live... Discard Israel from the equation and there is no clear understanding of how the rest can fit together...

The concepts of Restorationist thinking can only be sustained alongside a theology which maintains that God has replaced Israel with the church; and to hold that theological position involves the assertion that God has broken his Word of assurance to the Hebrew nation...

The basic concept of Restorationism stems from an erroneous understanding of Acts 3:21. This verse is interpreted to mean that God will restore the church to a glorious condition in the

world before the return of Christ... No 'restoration of all things' prior to the Second Advent is predicted by the prophets of Israel.<sup>36</sup>

Even if it could be shown that there was a widespread belief within the HCM that 'God has replaced Israel with the church' it is evident that such a viewpoint is vehemently rejected by the largest of the HCM streams: New Frontiers. It is true that there has been a significant move away from a Dispensationalist understanding of the eschatological place of Israel, yet it appears that all HCM streams believe in a future revival among Jews prior to the return of Christ. It is certainly rare to find someone within the HCM holding that Paul meant anything other than the Jewish people by his use of the term 'Israel' when he states that 'all Israel shall be saved'. Although the church is believed to be the key to the fulfilment of prophecy, the most common belief is of an expectation of salvation for many Jews as they are provoked to jealousy by God's acceptance of Gentile believers.

The HCM generally rejects the term 'replacement theology' in favour of a such terms as 'fulfilment theology'; replacement theology suggesting that the church has replaced Israel as a straight 'swap' thus OT Scriptures that once applied to Israel now apply to the church, whereas fulfilment theology holds to the view the fulfilment of Israel's hopes takes place in and through Jesus.

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<sup>36</sup>Noakes, 'A Personal and Biblical Perspective of Renewal', *Blessing the Church*, 153f.

## End of Excursus

### Summary of HCM positions

The clearest observation from the preceding chapters that have charted the historical development of HCM eschatology, is that there is considerable diversity of perspective among the different streams (and perhaps even within the streams themselves). Although they all have a common heritage, which could be described as a LRM-type eschatology, ever since the division of 1976 there have been clear distinctive eschatologies.

The early emphasis continues with Ichthus and Pioneer (at least in the case of Noble and Pullin) and to a lesser extent with Bridge Ministries (through their links with Perrins). That early emphasis is pre-millennial, while a distinctively post-millennial leaning is found in Covenant Ministries and a 'positive a-millennial' perspective dominates NFI's teaching; but as has been noted analysing the nature of HCM eschatology along millennial lines is evidently not the key. Forster stated that Wallis wanted to 'get rid of the millennium' and that they were in correspondence over this issue at the end of the 60s / beginning of the 70s,<sup>37</sup> yet millennialism has not tended to be a key point of focus. Indeed it is probably only Ichthus that have a specific view that is, all but, held right across their network.

There is also some evidence of a move toward a more conservative eschatology in some quarters. Evidence of this is found with NFI promoting Grudem's Systematic Theology, or in Salt and Light's cautious statements on

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<sup>37</sup>Forster, tape on 'The Millennium'.

eschatology, in spite of some considerable contact with Reconstructionism. All of this is part of a wider picture of the New Churches becoming more involved with the wider (evangelical) church.

Other emphases have also helped to moderate the views. In the early years of the HCM it was the nature and structure of the church that received the profile, but in recent years the mission of the church in evangelism has been the focus. Perhaps, too, a certain amount of disillusionment (reality?) has come in as was noted in the comments by Dave Day of Bridge Ministries. Any eschatology of victory must be seen to work in practise. Social action, justice and even ecology have also been taken on board by the New Churches which rather tempers the view of how mature the church really is. If 'charismatic' worship is the plumb-line then the New Churches could consider themselves to be moving toward maturity, but once a commitment to an involvement in such issues as justice and world evangelism is also considered to be within the church's commission, only the most arrogant of people would still lay claim to great maturity. If unity is limited to a commitment to one another, and the 'one another' is defined as some thirty people who share the same cultural background, then such unity is within one's grasp. If however the unity is seen to be on a considerably wider scale, including those of different persuasions, cultures and races, a different means of assessing unity has been introduced and the HCM looks less successful.

All of this suggests that the HCM has perhaps come of age and is beginning to wrestle with the call to be a



prophetic community, to be the eschatological people of God in a fuller sense. In responding to such a challenge previously held simplistic views of what it means to be the people of God needs to be abandoned in order to fully embrace the call.

This leads us to examine in more detail the challenges that are facing the HCM if it is to live up to its ecclesiology, and the need to re-examine some of the underlying beliefs. In order to do so we will turn our attention in the next two chapters to the HCM approach to Scripture and church history, with the suggestion that if both are adjusted that a revisioning of HCM eschatology might well be possible.

## **Part 3: Looking forward**

## Chapter 8

### **Towards Revisioning HCM Eschatology 1: The Church's Participation in Eschatology**

The HCM's approach to, and use of, the Bible has had much in common with that of the Brethren movement. An acceptance of the Bible's authority has gone without question; denominational practices have often been criticised because 'they are not biblical' and HCM ecclesiological beliefs and practices defended on the grounds that 'this is the clear teaching of Scripture'. Biblical authority, for example, has been the main reason why a number of HCM streams have not accepted the validity of women in leadership.<sup>1</sup> There has been a great reluctance to dismiss the Pauline passages as either non-Pauline and reflective of a later

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1 For a recent HCM defence of patriarchal leadership in the church see Barney Coombs, *Apostles Today, Christ's love gift to the church* (Tonbridge: Sovereign World, 1996), 155-175. So for example, in answer to the reason why God allowed Deborah to rule over Israel he writes: 'Most likely it was a judgement on the nation because of their sin.' In response to those who are willing to appoint women into leadership he states that 'I cannot help believing that they are making a serious mistake.'

period,<sup>2</sup> textually corrupt<sup>3</sup> or as simply non-relevant.<sup>4</sup> Indeed in some circles, not only has there been a reluctance to accept women into leadership, but historically, there were even tendencies to encourage women to cover their heads.<sup>5</sup>

In accepting the 'plain teaching of the Bible' as authoritative, and the appeal to biblical texts as presenting proof of the rightness of HCM beliefs, the Brethren roots of the movement show through.<sup>6</sup> Although using the Bible in such a way is not limited to

- 2 It is often suggested that the passage in Timothy is non-Pauline and therefore reflective of a later, authoritarian period; such an approach then gives little weight to any stated restriction.
- 3 Gordon Fee, as a Pentecostal scholar, can suggest that 1 Cor. 14:34-36 (women being silent) is textually corrupt: see *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699-705
- 4 F.F. Bruce dismissed the relevance of the words in 1 Tim. 2:11-15 stating that, 'It is merely a statement of practice at a particular time', thus making it temporal and local. ('Your Mind Matters', *Christianity Today*, April 7th., 1989, 25.)
- 5 Of the HCM streams that have been discussed, Ichthus has been the pace-setter in including women into leadership; others have followed such as Team Spirit, Pioneer and Bridge Ministries. The other groups have all placed (biblical) restrictions on women to one extent or another, although there are indications that other streams will move toward a greater level of freedom for women.
- 6 A recent example (1994/5) of this approach has been the defence of the phenomena surrounding the 'Toronto Blessing' through producing Scriptures that speak of laughing, crying, falling, shaking etc. Through the cumulative presentation of proof-texts the phenomena are seen to be biblical.

the Brethren movement (and could be argued that such an approach is fairly normal for those within the traditional evangelical wing of the church) there is, perhaps, one method of biblical interpretation that the Brethren movement has employed more than most other evangelical groups: the use of typology. Through typology Christ can often be found in most Old Testament stories: Joseph the deliverer of his brothers, Isaac the only son willing to be sacrificed, David the king; all those people (and many others) are types of the Christ. At such a level there is a place for typology, yet there are at least two ever-present dangers. In using typology there is the tendency to lose sight of the original historical context and to substitute typology for exegesis, and, secondly, in the desire to discover deeper meanings within Scripture it is more than possible to come up with fanciful interpretations.<sup>7</sup> The HCM has also employed typology, and sometimes in relationship to an 'end-time' understanding.<sup>8</sup>

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7 David L. Baker's book *Two Testaments, One Bible* (Leicester: Apollos, 1976, revised 1991) has a balanced chapter on Typology.

8 Eschatological significance was seen in the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, the return from the Exile, the birth of Benjamin (the son born in the land = the end-time church of freedom) the younger brother of Joseph (= Jesus). Scripture itself indicates that there are legitimate examples from the OT that the NT did not exhaust, for example the indication in Hebrews that the typology from Melchizedek could have been expanded further.

## The HCM: its use of Scripture

### *The HCM and Typology*

The use (and abuse) of typology is a thorny issue, but the practice is not a recent invention; indeed it has a long tradition, in particular with the early church school of Alexandria where an extreme form of typology was developed through its allegorical methods. Common to all typological approaches is the desire to discover the deeper meaning of the text. Typology and discovering a deeper meaning are not limited to Judaism or the post-New Testament era. It can be argued that Matthew, in particular, brought out new meanings from Old Testament Scriptures; for example in quoting Hosea 11:1 'out of Egypt I called my son', he applies this directly to Jesus' return from Egypt, claiming that this event in the life of God's Son, Jesus, fulfilled the text.

To deny the possibility of a *sensus plenior*<sup>9</sup> in a text seems to be an indefensible position when the New Testament itself is examined. It is possible, of course, to maintain that any such use of the Scriptures is limited to the original writers who were operating under a unique inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore such a technique is not permissible for the modern interpreter.<sup>10</sup>

9 Defined by Brown as 'the deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, that is seen to exist in the words of Scripture when they are studied in the light of further revelation or of development in the understanding of revelation.' (Quoted in Baker, *Testaments*, 193,194).

10This position is defended by R. N. Longenecker in *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids,

Typology should strictly be separated from the concept of *sensus plenior*<sup>11</sup> but it is often through using a typological approach that a fuller meaning is brought out.

Typology that draws upon Old Testament Scripture by way of paradigm or analogy can prove to be a very positive approach.<sup>12</sup> The New Testament writers themselves used Old Testament stories in a similar way, using the narrative by way of analogy. New Testament events were then understood to be analogous to the Old Testament situation. This would seem to be the explanation of Matthew's use of the text from Hosea; the event in the life of Jesus was analogous to that of the Exodus, God had protected his favoured ones and brought them out of Egypt in the past and he was doing the same again with Messiah. In that sense Matthew could claim that the Hosea text was being fulfilled without suggesting that Hosea was really prophesying of the future deliverance of the Messiah from Egypt.

The HCM, however, has perhaps gone beyond the above. Old Testament stories have not simply been used in an illustrative or analogous way; rather they have been used to speak of the future, or perhaps more

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1975), 215-219.

<sup>11</sup>Baker, *Testaments*, 194, makes this clear.

<sup>12</sup>Christopher Wright has employed this paradigmatic method successfully in the use of the Bible on social ethics where specific Old Testament cases serve as a model to explain a general principle. His method is explained in *Transformation* 1.1, 11-20.

accurately, to speak of contemporary events (the restoration of the church) and the near future (the final harvest prior to the *parousia*). Right from the early days of the HCM Old Testament narratives have been used to teach a restoration in 'the last days'. That God would call a remnant from the apostate church to pioneer toward maturity was understood to have been prophesied through the concept of the remnant returning from the Exile.<sup>13</sup> The establishment of the kingdom of David spoke of God's divine order in the church;<sup>14</sup> the summer and autumn rains that produced a harvest in Israel's land spoke of the former rain on the Day of Pentecost and the latter rain immediately prior to the return of Christ;<sup>15</sup> Passover and Pentecost would be followed by Tabernacles.<sup>16</sup> After the Exile prophets who addressed the people back in their land spoke of future glorious days. Haggai said that, 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house' (Haggai 2:9, NIV); this was seen by the HCM as prophesying of the glory that would fill God's

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13For instance Crick, 'A Remnant shall Return' in *Fulness*, Vols. 1-4.

14This was a theme that Baxter taught on in 1975. The church was in a period of transition from the 'head and shoulders' government of Saul (and by implication of the denominations) to the government of David. Wright sees the teaching on the Davidic kingdom as a primary tenet of HCM teaching. (For his criticism of this see 'Restoration', *Themelios*, Vol. 16.2, 7.)

15See for instance *Restoration*, March / April 1985, 17.

16These teachings are fundamental to both the LRM and the early HCM.



temple (the church) as this age closed.<sup>17</sup>

In more recent days Paul Cain<sup>18</sup> has used Joel's description of the destructive army of locusts to refer to the victorious overcoming army consisting of God's people in the last days. He has not used it by way of illustration or analogy but has effectively said 'this is what Joel the prophet saw', and so can speak of the end-time church as 'Joel's army in training'.<sup>19</sup>

### ***HCM and a 'Peshar' Interpretation***

The use of Scripture that most parallels this HCM approach is the *peshar* method employed by the Qumran community.<sup>20</sup> The community made claims that they had already experienced the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit<sup>21</sup> and not surprisingly biblical interpretation in their community 'was considered first of all to be revelatory and / or charismatic in nature'.<sup>22</sup> Those involved in this method believed 'the scriptural

<sup>17</sup>This theme is taken up by Pullin, 'The Sleeping Beauty', *Fulness*, Vol. 14, 8,9.

<sup>18</sup>Although not part of the HCM, he is held in high regard as a prophet by many within the HCM. His teaching on the 'end-times' also fits the HCM scheme as he believes in a victorious church prior to the *parousia*.

<sup>19</sup>*Blessing the Church*, 90.

<sup>20</sup>Mark Stibbe in *Times of Refreshing* (London: Marshall-Pickering, 1995) suggests that a *peshar* approach is a legitimate way to use Scripture in analysing a fresh outpouring of the Spirit.

<sup>21</sup>James Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 61, quotes 1QS 4:21; CD 2:12; 1QH 12:12; 14:13; 16:12.

prophecies to have been written for their own time and predicament, and they interpreted the biblical texts in the light of their acute eschatological expectations'.<sup>23</sup> Such was the intensity of their beliefs that this group of pious Jews 'left Jerusalem in order to form together the one true Israel close to the place where according to Ezekiel 47 a brook from the temple would flow in to the Dead Sea and make this fresh'.<sup>24</sup> Ellis summarises the practice as 'both charismatic and eschatological'. Charismatic, as only the wise teachers could bring such an interpretation, and eschatological, for the promises and prophecies had 'their fulfilment in the writer's own time and community'.<sup>25</sup>

The parallels between aspects of the Qumran community and elements of the HCM are fascinating. The Qumran sect believed they were the rightful heirs of Judaism; the return from Exile had begun in them and would be effected through them; indeed God had already begun the process of liberation secretly in them.<sup>26</sup> Essentially they 'saw themselves as the final

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22Longenecker, *Exegesis*, 43-44

23Werblosky and Wigoder, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*, quoted in W.W. Klein, C.L. Blomberg & R.L. Hubbard Jr., (eds), *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 128.

24Jean-Jacques Suurmond *Word and Spirit at Play* (London: SCM, 1994), 101.

25E. Earle Ellis 'How the New Testament uses the Old', in I. Howard Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1985), 207f.

26This brief summary is drawn from Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992),

generation about whom biblical prophecy speaks'.<sup>27</sup> Although separated by two millennia, the self-perception of the two groups is remarkably similar; therefore the belief within the HCM that the Scriptures spoke directly of them, or more accurately, the outpouring of the Spirit, the restoration of the church and their immediate circumstances should be of no surprise. (Perhaps it should be noted that such a self-perception is not limited to the HCM, for many groups who have viewed themselves as the living in the 'last days' have seen the Scriptures as speaking directly of their day: one only has to consider the immense appeal of Hal Lindsey's writings on the 'end-times' in the 1960s and 70s.)

The Qumran community and the NT writers both claimed that their respective communities had entered the last days; for the HCM to follow the *peshet* approach, without any modifications, would only be possible if the last days were beginning with them. Hence some form of control would have to be brought to any *peshet* model.

### ***HCM and Restorationist Church History***

As has already been suggested there are diverse concepts of 'restoration', so the underlying concept is not unique to the HCM; indeed even the type of

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203-209.

<sup>27</sup>Klein, et al. (eds.), *Introduction*, 27. This view is challenged however by Berger, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Louisville: Westminster, 1996), 102: 'The judgment that "the community" of Qumran saw itself as the community of the last generation and that the coming of God or of the Messiah was imminent is misleading.

restoration put forward by the HCM is not unique. Those within the HCM who have sought to find a tradition within church history to identify with have spoken of the radical church tradition, and the Anabaptist movement, in particular, has often been looked to for inspiration. The Anabaptist perception of church history was similar to that of the HCM and in his book *Anabaptist View of the Church*,<sup>28</sup> Franklin Littell suggests that the particular view of history was central in their formation: they were believers who accepted a primitivistic philosophy of history and applied it to the 'fall' of the church. Under such a concept, history moves from Eden's perfection, to a fall, to a partial restitution, and only then to God's final restoration.

Although the creation, fall, redemption moving toward consummation, has not been used by the HCM, the pattern is identical to that adopted by the HCM, who have tended to use the establishment of the Davidic kingdom, division, exile and subsequent return from exile as their paradigm.

### ***Summary of HCM approaches***

The above two aspects, a *peshet* type approach to Scripture and a restorationist approach to church history, undergird HCM eschatology and a revisionist approach to both of them will now be suggested, in the current and subsequent chapter.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Second Edition, Boston: Starr King. This view is critiqued in James McClendon, Jr. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 30-35.

<sup>29</sup>By singling out these two aspects I am not suggesting that

## Revisioning HCM Eschatology

### *A controlled typological / pesher approach*

Whenever a group make a statement of belief regarding their own significance this always needs interpretation; so we can rightly ask whether the Qumran community expected a literal river to flow from the temple toward them, or whether they situated themselves geographically as a prophetic sign; similarly, was the Montanist expectation as simple, and as literal, as seeing a literal New Jerusalem descend to their locale? Or, to bring it into the arena of the New Testament, did Peter suggest through his *pesher* interpretation of Joel that the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the prophecy? Although Peter uses a *pesher* approach we must not accuse him of claiming more than he actually states. With regard to Joel's prophecy Peter expected further fulfilments, something which is explicit in his sermon through the promise of the Spirit, not only to those who were present, but also to their children and 'to all those afar off'. Thus Pentecost was 'that' which Joel spoke of, and yet Peter made it plain that there would be further 'thats' throughout history, until the ultimate fulfilment would take place at the *parousia*.<sup>30</sup> This is necessarily so, for any contemporary experience

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they are the only relevant aspects, but they are key and also distinctive.

<sup>30</sup>It could, of course, be argued that individual Spirit reception and empowerment is an on-going participation in the one outpouring of the Spirit through Jesus' exaltation, so that Spirit reception is a participation in Pentecost rather than a series of *pesher* fulfilments of Joel.

of the Spirit can only ever be a partial experience, a firstfruit or downpayment.

In the light of the above, whenever events take place that result in a claim that 'this is that' two aspects must apply, both of which will be controlling factors in any authentic *peshar*-type approach. There must be firstly, a real correspondence between the event and the Scripture, and secondly, an understanding that no event (prior to the *parousia*) will ever exhaust the promise. Such an approach draws on the traditions of typology and *peshar*, while refusing to suggest naively that the Spirit's activity in the life of the Christian community is the full manifestation or fulfilment of the promise. Provided the latter point is adhered to a control is brought to this hermeneutical practice.<sup>31</sup>

James McClendon Jr., commenting on Peter's interpretation of Joel on the day of Pentecost, writes,

the events of Pentecost are the events of the prophetic message. We have the now-familiar pattern again: This is that. And once again the historian's judgment that the Joel passage refers to entirely different events, perhaps in the prophet's own day, cannot falsify Peter's claim. For we are here in the presence of a regular motif in biblical literature in which

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<sup>31</sup>Theologically this control safeguards any conflation of Christology and ecclesiology; such a distinction must be maintained particularly if one has a 'high' ecclesiology, such as undergirds the HCM. There are other safeguards that need to be in place, perhaps that of the witness of the faith community should be high on the list, so that no interpretation becomes simply a private interpretation.

language about one set of events and circumstances is applied under divine guidance to another set of events and circumstances.<sup>32</sup>

That such an approach is possible is in part dependent on one's ecclesiology, and specifically on interpreting the church as both the messianic and eschatological community. The extent to which the church participates in and contributes toward the messianic task of bringing in the eschaton then becomes a key issue.

### ***The Church as the Messianic and Eschatological Community***

To explore this further and then seek to use the findings as a means of revisioning HCM eschatology I propose to examine a number of inter-related themes. Once these themes have been examined we will then be able to allow them to further revision HCM eschatology.

#### **(a) The Messianic Spirit on the community**

The church has been endued with the Spirit of Messiah and as such participates in the messianic task. This is the approach of Luke, who unlike the majority of Pentecostal / Charismatics did not reduce the baptism in the Spirit to an individual experience, but saw Spirit-baptism as the means of launching the community into the messianic mission of restoring the kingdom. The activity of Jesus the Messiah is continued through the Spirit-empowered community (Acts 1:1), and it is certainly legitimate to interpret that Luke understood the

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<sup>32</sup>Systematic Theology Vol. 1, 33.

kingdom being restored to (the redefined) Israel in the ministry and experience of this community.<sup>33</sup>

### **(b) A Christ-centred eschatology**

Adrio König, presenting his Christ-centred eschatology, uses three paradigms, involving the past, present and future activity of Christ.<sup>34</sup> He understands eschatology, not as a series of (chronological) events, but as taking place in Christ, the one who is the *eschatos*; the end then is essentially personal rather than the unfolding of a time-table. So for König eschatology is not some future event, for 'His return is no more eschatological than his earthly work or his resurrection'. Eschatology, under this approach deals with 'the entire history of Jesus Christ... [for] it must also involve the past (Jesus' earthly work) and the present (his work in the Holy Spirit).'<sup>35</sup> In three consecutive chapters König then proceeds to outline his model under the headings of: Christ realizes the goal for us, Christ realizes the goal in

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33Norman Krauss points out the similarity of the Lukan language used to describe the Holy Spirit's activity in the birth narratives of Jesus and of the pentecostal church. This indicates for Krauss that Luke sees the church in similar terms to the incarnation. The Spirit is giving birth to a messianic community, so 'In both cases the body of Christ is formed through a special work of God's Spirit. This is obviously incarnational language. It strongly suggests the closest kind of association between the ministry of Jesus... and the ministry of the church.' (See *The Community of the Spirit*, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1993, 14f.)

34*The Eclipse of Christ in Eschatology* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1989).

35Ibid., 5.



us, and Christ realizes the goal with us. The former relates to the past, the last to the future *parousia*, while the title of the middle chapter relates to the work of the Spirit in the body of Christ. König explains the relationship of the three modes of eschatology in his final chapter:

It is supremely meaningful that this goal should be attained in three ways, that the first two should bear some marks of incompleteness and point toward perfection in the third. If the first mode had not been accomplished without us, God's wrath would have fallen upon us and we would have perished eternally. Then the *eschaton* could not have been realized in any mode at all! This is true of the second mode, too, since God's intent was to make a being other than himself to behave freely and responsibly, sharing in his love and joy. Therefore God ordained this interim that humanity might actively cooperate in reaching the goal and participate in reaping the harvest, rather than (as the women at the crucifixion) merely standing by and looking on. When this is seen as the meaning of the interim (i.e., our participation in the harvest – kingdom, mission), naturally our responsibility and its inadequate discharge becomes an issue. And this adds to the imperfection of the second mode - which of course should be laid to our account, not God's. The third and final mode in which God reaches his goal is complete in every respect.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 181.

Although König does not advocate any form of restoration, or even any gradual development toward the third mode, his approach does show that eschatology is not simply future nor past; there is a present aspect to eschatology. This should be a vital element in any true charismatic theology that acknowledges the presence of the eschatological Spirit. Although any realized eschatology can only ever be partial and provisional, the activity of the eschatological Spirit must mean that the church participates in the Christ event.

König is not alone in these views; Barth, for instance, commenting on this issue in relation to John's Gospel, says that 'The Fourth Gospel shows us that it is necessary to understand the event of Easter and that of the *parousia*, with the intervening history of the community under the present power of the Holy Spirit, as different moments of one and the same act.'<sup>37</sup>

Under this approach the Christ Event is continuing, albeit in an incomplete way. If the *peshet* approach allows us to say 'this is that' (with the qualifications above), through König's model we can also say 'then is now', for eschatology cannot be pushed into the future; it is present now (again qualified by the provisional comments above).

### **(c) The corporate Christ**

Another way of approaching this aspect is to use the well-worked concept of corporate personality, and to understand the church as the corporate Christ. Although

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<sup>37</sup>*Church Dogmatics*, (1955-69), III/2, p. 497.

there is always the danger of confusing our Christology with our ecclesiology, it is imperative that alongside a 'high' Christology there is also a high ecclesiology. Brad Kallenberg writing about incarnational evangelism puts it this way:

Outsiders who encounter the authentic Christian community encounter the story of Jesus. The Pauline corpus puts it even more strongly. Outsiders who encounter the authentic Christian community encounter Jesus himself, because the community is his Body... to the extent that the Spirit now indwells the kingdom community, the incarnation has been in some sense extended.<sup>38</sup>

This participation in Christ is evident, as Kallenberg suggests, in the Pauline metaphor of the Body; another image that suggests participation is the comparison of the marriage relationship with that of Christ and the church - the husband and wife becoming one flesh reflecting the mystery of the unity of the head with the body, the partnership of the Bridegroom with the Bride (Ephesians 5:32). Richard Bauckham, using the book of Revelation, also suggests that partnership between Christ and his people is the result of the Lamb opening the scroll. The following quotes suggest this participation in Christ's victory by his followers:

Only the Lamb can open the scroll and reveal its contents, because it is his victory which makes possible the implementation of the

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<sup>38</sup>'Conversion Converted' in *Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. LXVII, No. 4, 359.

purpose of God... the scroll will reveal how the followers of Christ are to participate in the coming of God's kingdom by following him in witness, sacrifice and victory... What has not been revealed, except in hints which John now draws out, is the role of the followers of the Lamb in bringing the world to repentance and faith through their witness and death.<sup>39</sup>

To be the witnesses who bring the nations to faith in the one true God is the novel role of God's eschatological people... The witness of his followers participate in his power when they too are faithful witnesses even to death.<sup>40</sup>

The effect of the martyrs' witness... confronts the nations with the choice... The result of this choice, the outcome of the whole conflict, is then depicted in a new image – a traditional image of eschatological consummation... the image of harvest.<sup>41</sup>

The church's role then is to participate in the messianic task as a partner, but even more than a partner, for it is the body in which the fullness of Christ is manifest. Other biblical images confirm this participation: the image of labour pains that are experienced both within God and his people (Is. 42:5-25; Rom. 8:19-28) is one

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<sup>39</sup>*The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 80-82.

<sup>40</sup>*ibid.*, 87.

<sup>41</sup>*ibid.*, 94f.

such image. Perhaps though, the most striking claim is made in Colossians by Paul (?) that he is filling up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1:24). Although he does not suggest his own sufferings are redemptive, he understands that, as he follows his Master, there is a participation in the Christ Event and, as such, his sufferings make a profound impact on the church, even contributing to their experience.

Along a similar line to this suffering motif which fills up (*antanapleroo*) the afflictions of Christ, is the concept of the full number of Gentiles (*to pleroma*, Rom. 11:25) and of martyrs (*plerothosin*, Rev. 6:11) that are respectively saved or killed before the end.<sup>42</sup> Although the experience and history of God's people contribute toward the eschatological future, we should be wary of seeking to push these motifs into some futuristic scheme, as we need to bear in mind Witherington's insight that 'Jewish and Christian contemporaries who wrote on eschatological matters, are capable of combining the language of possible immanence with a discussion of events that must transpire before the end

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<sup>42</sup>The concept of martyrdom contributing toward the salvatory acts of God finds a background in the martyr tradition of 4 Maccabees where the death of martyrs can bring salvation to others: 'Be satisfied with our sacrifice for them. Make my blood their cleansing, and receive my life as their ransom' (6:28f). Max Turner, *Power from on High*, (Sheffield: SAP, 1996), 135, says of this text that 'Eleazer was requesting God to accept his righteous death (and others to follow) as enough punishment for Israel. It was a plea to God to concentrate his wrath on Israel in the martyrs - and so reverse her shame and make her the righteous and free people he had always intended them to be.'

may come.<sup>43</sup>

#### **(d) The nature of biblical promise**

Biblical promise differs from simple prediction; predictions come to pass and are verifiable, but biblical promise is open to repeated fulfilments. Indeed any fulfilment of promise that is outside of Christ can only be a partial fulfilment, for all the promises find their ultimate fulfilment in him (2 Cor. 1:20). Moltmann in his *Theology of Hope*, explored this dynamic aspect of promise, and stated that, 'Hence every reality in which a fulfilment is taking place now becomes the confirmation, exposition, and liberation of a greater hope.'<sup>44</sup> Every promise and indeed every fulfilment serves to point the people of God forward. Although we must be very cautious about claiming a particular event as the fulfilment of a specific promise (thus falling into the trap of reducing prophecy to prediction), it is possible to see events as fulfilling Scripture, without being the fulfilment of the biblical promise. Again this accords with the controlled *pesher* approach suggested above and is also in accord with Peter's use of Joel's prophecy.

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43Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992) 19. Alongside the references in Paul to the full number / fullness of Gentiles, there are other events that must take place before the end. Paul's words regarding the 'man of lawlessness' who must be revealed before the parousia is one such particular event. We should be wary about determining a scheme of events from such phrases.

44*Theology of Hope* (London: SCM, 1967), 106.

### **(e) Eschatological events taking place in history**

The biblical writers themselves used apocalyptic language and an eschatological understanding to speak of specific historical events. So Jesus described the fall of Jerusalem (as did other prophets before him of other cities / empires) in eschatological terms, for the event was eschatological. In a very real sense the end had come, end-time judgement had been demonstrated in history; yet at another level the judgement was partial, for the end awaits the future. To illustrate the use of apocalyptic language, Tom Wright uses the example of someone describing the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as ‘an earth shattering event’; however, no-one would accuse them of suggesting an earthquake was the cause of its fall.<sup>45</sup> I suspect, however, that a biblical writer could have used such (or even stronger) language, not only as a means of speech, but to indicate that this event was indeed an eschatological event.

In the same way as this was true in judgement, so it is true in redemption. Fee emphasises that ‘the resurrection of the dead is for Paul the final event on God’s eschatological calendar, the unmistakable evidence that the End has fully arrived.’<sup>46</sup> For the NT writers, now that the eschatological event of the resurrection was a past event, all activity of God’s Spirit had to be seen as eschatological, for the Spirit was understood to be the eschatological gift to the

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<sup>45</sup>*Testament*, 282.

<sup>46</sup>*God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrikson, 1994), 805.

redeemed community.

It is, then, possible to suggest that current pneumatic events are a fulfilment of Scripture, provided we do not suggest that they are the fulfilment. Whenever the Spirit comes, the event must be eschatological, and in that sense whenever the Spirit manifests Jesus returns, for this Spirit is none other than the Spirit of Jesus.

## **Summary of the above**

The HCM has at times seen its own role (or the charismatic activity of the Spirit in the church) as a major key to the fulfilment of the purposes of God, as has been suggested, in a way that was paralleled at Qumran. Such a belief can foster an arrogant and elitist attitude, and it certainly needs moderation and qualification, yet there is sufficient evidence from diverse, yet complementary strands that the church does indeed participate in the Christ Event and therefore contributes toward the fulfilling of the eschatological plan (or 'hastening the day' - 2 Pet. 3:12). However the HCM added to that concept the specific approach to history of restorationism. It is this perspective of history that will be examined in the next chapter, with a view to also bringing a revision to it.



## Chapter 9

### **Towards Revisioning HCM Eschatology 2: The Historical Perspective**

The HCM belief in Restorationism with respect to the historical process meant that a) the current church was making a contribution toward the eschaton in a greater way than the church of former eras (with the likely / possible exception of the apostolic era), and that b) there would be a final generation who would make such a contribution that the end would then come. In simple terms, the final generation of believers would be unique and the preceding generations, since the Reformation, would have gradually exhibited this uniqueness, as they successively embodied each new recovery of NT truth and practice.

The biblical imagery of the pure bride without spot and blemish was the most common picture that the HCM referred to (Ephes. 5:27; cf. Rev. 19:7,8). Jesus, it was stated, was not coming to marry an immature bride, rather the church at his return would be in a state of readiness and maturity. The major flaw in using the Ephesian text, in this way, is the inevitable conclusion that if the mature bride is the final generation, the marriage is only between Christ and that final generation (although, including all others from previous generations who have also 'overcome' to the point of maturity). The bride, however, is normally understood to

be the church from all ages which indicates a weakness in the restorationist viewing of history.<sup>1</sup> In this respect perhaps a Catholic understanding of the church, whether past or present, alive or departed, as the one universal church is a necessary corrective to the HCM belief.

## **An alternative approach to history**

James McClendon Jr., writing both as a narrative theologian and as one who is highly sympathetic with the Anabaptist view that church history is moving towards God's final restoration, modifies it somewhat through an approach to Scripture (and by implication, history) as follows:

Scripture... effects a link between the church of the apostles and our own. So the vision can be expressed as a hermeneutical motto, which is shared awareness of the present community as the primitive community and the eschatological community. In other words, the church now is the primitive church and the church on the day of judgement is the church now... This is not meant as a denial of the facts of history, nor a rejection of their significance; it is a claim for the historic significance of this present time in the life of the church and therefore by

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1 There are those who (apparently) advocate that only those who 'overcome' / 'are counted worthy' will participate in the millennial rule, and therefore under this approach the use of the above Scriptures would be consistent. However, this is not normally accepted, indicating that the HCM approach to history, and application of Scripture, is inadequate.

implication of every other present time in her life.<sup>2</sup>

This proposal calls for a fresh approach to history; it appeals to a conscious identification with all believers who have gone before, and indeed all who are yet to live. Although this might well be a novel concept for those within the HCM, it would not have been so for the people of Israel, for through a similar approach, ‘all had escaped Egyptian slavery, by it all had crossed the Reed Sea, by it each had been addressed by the “thou shalt” and the “thou shalt not” of JHWH at Sinai’.<sup>3</sup> Israel were one people, and regardless of their own particular historical circumstances they were always to remember that they (and not just their forefathers) had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. By adopting this approach, the strength, and challenge, of the HCM / Anabaptist belief in the need for the modern day church to be renewed or restored is maintained, while no particular eschatological scheme is necessarily suggested. Further in McClendon’s own words:

This understanding of the vision appropriates Littel’s version [the restoration of apostolic Christianity] without committing itself to literal eras of “fall” and datable periods of “restitution” - the present church, like the New Testament community of disciples, is often errant or fallen, often restored.<sup>4</sup>

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2 *Theology*, Vol. 1, 31.

3 *Theology*, Vol. 2, 432.

4 *Theology*, Vol. 1, 32. The reference to Littel is to his book *Anabaptist View of the Church*.

The HCM approach to eschatology has been chronologically orientated, such an approach being typical of its Brethren (and indeed conservative) roots, with a time-table of events that must take place prior to the *parousia*.<sup>5</sup> The events leading up to the end have not been that of some Middle Eastern restoration or rise of antichrist (as per Dispensationalist-type suggestions) but of the restoration of the church to a NT expression. The imminence of the end has given way to a belief that Christ cannot return 'until' certain events take place: these events being ecclesio-centric ones.

If there are events in history to be fulfilled, McClendon's approach suggests that the whole of history is the arena in which these events are fulfilled. By so suggesting there is less concern with chronology, and yet the possibility of history being 'filled up' through eschatological events remains an option. Norman Krauss, in *God our Savior (sic)*, presents the comparison of chronological and what he terms, 'kairotic' events. Although chronologically no prediction can be made about the return of Christ, 'it is the next kairotic event and it has been introduced chronologically by Jesus.' Ever since the Ascension it can be stated with certainty that he is coming soon, for once the new age has been inaugurated and the church becomes

5 Although the Plymouth Brethren held that Christ could come at any time, there was a fascination with end-time events. Events in the Middle East would take place after the rapture of the church, but in practice history was moving toward those things being increasingly in place prior to the rapture of the church. So although Christ could come at any time, in practical terms there was the expectation of specific events even prior to the church's *rapture*.

involved in her mission the next 'kairotic' event is the *parousia*.<sup>6</sup>

Through the above two complementary voices the HCM restorationist approach to history can be revisioned. By so doing the strengths of the HCM approach are maintained:

- a) The belief that the church co-operates with the Spirit to bring in the end.
- b) The ever-present need for the church to be restored by the power of the Spirit in accord with the pattern (but not the blueprint) of the Apostolic church.

While at the same time the weaknesses of the HCM approach are avoided:

- a) The inevitable self-assessment of historical significance, namely that the current church is more 'restored' than the church in previous generations. Such a self-assessment can tend toward elitism and sectarianism.
- b) The use of Scripture in an inappropriate chronological fashion, such as the concept of the pure bride mentioned above.

All of the above leaves open the question raised by chronological-type approaches regarding the nature of the final generation. For the Dispensationalist the final generation is marked by apostasy and luke-warmness, while for the Restorationist the final generation is marked by apostolic power and the successful discharge of the Great Commission. This question

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6 (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1991), 187-206, for this discussion; quote from p. 203.

cannot, in the final analysis, be easily answered and any suggestion that there is progress (as per Restorationism) should be modified along the McClendon / Krauss lines above.

## **Excursus: key Scriptural texts the HCM have used**

The HCM have traditionally used a set of core texts to endorse the belief in a pre-*parousia* restoration of church life. These texts have been:

- Ephesians 4:11-16 with the concept that ‘five-fold’ ministry gifts will develop the church to a maturity equal to the ‘stature of Christ’.<sup>7</sup>
- Acts 3:19-21 and the belief that Christ will not return until all things have been restored.
- John 17 and Jesus’ prayer for unity.
- Matthew 24:14 and the good news proclaimed to all people with the end then coming.
- 1 Corinthians 15:24-27 and a claim that the end will only come after Jesus has subjugated all enemies to himself, with death, the last enemy, being dealt with at the *parousia*.

The weakness in all the above is the chronological belief that leads to the conclusion that the *parousia* is not in itself the key factor that brings about the maturity,

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<sup>7</sup> In many ways this has been the central text of the HCM, for this became the key passage to demonstrate that firstly, apostolic ministry will continue to the *parousia* and secondly, that the church would come to maturity.

unity or restoration. For the HCM it is the church in triumph that is the means by which these aspects are brought about so as Christ returns for a victorious bride. It would appear that the healthier aspects in the above beliefs are a commitment to the universal proclamation of the gospel and to unity, rather than the subjective claim that the church (or a sector of it) has reached a spiritual maturity.

## End of Excursus

### Historical progression: the ‘filling up’ of history

Although the Scriptural texts appealed to do not present the triumphant eschatology of Restorationism, there are, perhaps other Scriptural models that can be drawn upon that illustrate that there is a progression within history toward the appointed goal. Paul can be read as giving this perspective on the advent of Christ, who came ‘when the time had fully come’ (*to pleroma tou chrnou*). This can be understood as teaching that an era had been fulfilled, or that the coming of Christ gave meaning and perspective to all the prior chronology. However, regardless of the way it is read, there is an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God moving history toward its appointed climax.

There are two strands that run parallel in the NT: that of the imminent return of Christ and of certain events that must take place prior to his return.<sup>8</sup> So although the book of Revelation speaks of a soon return of Christ the

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<sup>8</sup> See Witherington, *Jesus*, 19.

writer can also present history in dramatic form as moving toward a climax with increasing intensity. Bauckham notes, for example, the increasing impact of judgement: initially one quarter of the earth is affected with the seals being opened, moving through a one-third proportion when the trumpets are blown, until the effect of the bowls are unlimited. The three series of judgements are progressive because they are progressively nearer the end.<sup>9</sup> However, any idea of progression must be held in tension with imminence of the *parousia*.

In his article 'A Passion for the Kingdom' Steven Land presents a challenge to those of a charismatic tradition to become part of 'the teleological process of suffering, healing, hope and victory which presses toward the kingdom in God.' As Trinitarians 'salvation history is a progression from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, then in the Spirit through the Son to the Father.'<sup>10</sup> The Spirit who has come to empower the church is understood to be calling for a people to participate in this process.

### ***Statistics and sociological perspectives***

Statistics are renowned as being wonderfully adaptable to suit the purpose of the person using them; the missiologist Ralph Winter is quoted enthusiastically by those who appeal to the evident success of the church in her mission.<sup>11</sup>

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9 Bauckham, *The Theology of Revelation*, 40.

10 *JPT* 1, 31ff.

11 In the magazine *Mission Frontiers*, May-June 1995, p. 5,



However the meaning of statistics and therefore the significance of history can be challenged by sociologists. Cox claims that Pentecostalism did not signal the end of an era but the beginning of a new epoch.<sup>12</sup> In other words charismatic Christianity should be understood within the bigger circle of the new spiritual awareness in society. Through this perspective, the statistics, charismatic experience and belief in revival is seen as part of the bigger picture of a God who is at work, not just within the church, but in the world as a whole. It is this challenge that all charismatics must face so as their dualistic tendencies are squashed. Land's words can be particularly applied to the HCM when he suggests that 'the church is to recognize the divine presence providentially at work in creation as well as in the more immediate existential soteriological dimensions.'<sup>13</sup> An openness to the wider perspectives of God at work in the world will mean that true spirituality, and therefore eschatological significance, is much harder to assess, but it should not diminish the willingness to participate in the ongoing rule of God.

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Winter suggests that in 1430 there was one Bible-believing Christian for every 99 people on the planet; by 1790 there was one for every 49 people; in 1940 this had shrunk to one in 32; in 1960 the figure was one in 24; in 1970, one in 19; in 1980, one in 16 and by 1995 one in 8. (Quoted in Don Williams *Revival: the Real Thing*.)

<sup>12</sup>Cox, *Fire*, e.g. pp. 94,102,119f.

<sup>13</sup>JPT 1, 39.

## **Conclusions on revisioning the historical perspective**

The HCM eschatology that involves a commitment to chronological progression needs to be broadened out considerably to realise that God is at work in the world as whole, and yet through co-operating with the Spirit's role in salvation history the church needs to groan toward that goal.<sup>14</sup> To do so would mean that a passion for the coming day would be maintained but that there would be the abandonment of any elitist tendencies. The work of the eschatological Spirit needs to be embodied in the egalitarian society that Jesus came to bring.<sup>15</sup> A belief in the significance of God at work within the church needs not be denied but the governing factor becomes the challenge to embody the coming age.

For the HCM to revise its eschatology, its dependence on a chronological perspective would need some adjustment, without necessarily denying the possibility that the final generation could exhibit unique spiritual characteristics. However the church today, as at all times, needs to perceive itself in relationship both to the past and to the future: in the words of McClendon,

Authentic Christian faith is prophetic faith; it sees the present in correct perspective only when it construes the present by means of the prefiguring past (God's past) while at the same

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14Paul speaks in an eschatological context of the three-fold groaning of creation, the Spirit and the people of God (Rom. 8:22-26).

15See for instance Moltmann in 'A Pentecostal Theology of Life', *JPT* 9, 3-15

time construing it by means of the prophetic future (God's future). "This is that" declares the present relevance of what God has previously done, while "then is now" does not abolish the future but declares the present relevance of what God will assuredly do.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Theology*, Vol. 2, 69. Appendix 3 of this thesis seeks to illustrate this two-fold approach.

## Chapter 10

### The Challenges of HCM Eschatology

Although HCM eschatology cannot be compressed into one specific perspective, and hence we should strictly speak of HCM eschatologies, there remains a core set of beliefs which can be conveniently summarised under the phrase 'restorationism'. The eschatology had developed from the desire to implement the radical ecclesiology that was perceived to be in place in the first-century apostolic church; this eschatology was then further shaped by the restorationist perspective of history. The eschatology and ecclesiology have therefore been intrinsically twined and so one of the key questions that now faces the diversifying 'new church' movement is how close to that original (eschatological and ecclesiological) vision it should adhere and to what extent that original vision is still shaping those faith communities.

Vincent Branick, a Roman Catholic writer, in his biblical and historical examination of the development of church from the Pauline writings to the fourth century writes that:

The prohibition of Laodicea completes a critical cycle. The Lord's Supper had changed from evening meal to stylized (*sic*) ritual. The assembly had moved from dining room to sacred hall. Leadership had shifted from family

members to special clergy. Now the original form of church was declared illegal.<sup>1</sup>

Although making no value judgement on the demise of the original form of church, his observation notes how the original shape (and, by implication, original vision) of church can eventually become 'illegal'. The HCM, like all other groups, needs to heed the lessons from history, and perhaps should look to learn from one of its close 'relatives' and historic predecessor, the Pentecostal movement. Margaret Poloma's sociological study of the leading North American Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God, highlighted the rise of institutionalism and subsequent loss of 'charismatic' identity. In the light of this she suggests that the Assemblies of God need to move away from an increasing priestly leadership, which tends to routinise charisma, toward a prophetic-pastoral leadership which would foster the freedom of spiritual experience.<sup>2</sup> This increased institutionalism is, at least in measure, tied up with numerical 'success', the need to maintain quality control in a rapidly growing movement and perhaps also a shift away from eschatologically held beliefs.<sup>3</sup> The loss

- 1 *The House Churches in the Writings of Paul* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989). The above quote from p. 134 with the reference to Laodicea being the Synod of Laodicea, circa 365, and specifically a reference to Canon 58 which forbade the celebration of the Eucharist in a private home.
- 2 *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1989), particularly pp. 232-41.
- 3 Faupel, *Gospel*, places the issue of the imminent return of Christ as a central shaping influence on the whole

of this eschatological emphasis leads Harvey Cox to observe of modern-day Pentecostals that, 'Now they seem confident not that Jesus is coming soon, but that He probably isn't, and that therefore nothing will interrupt their pursuit of success and self-indulgence.'<sup>4</sup>

The same issues face the HCM: numerical growth means that they are no longer viewed as a sectarian inconvenience but have found themselves accepted as part of the wider evangelical movement.<sup>5</sup> All the while that the HCM groups were small they could maintain a clear identity, seeing themselves, to some extent at least, as the true successors of the faith; but now that they no longer meet as a handful in a front-room but in a diversity of public settings, with many actively pursuing the refurbishment of large auditoriums, the tendency is to lose a sectarian identity, with the possibility that churches with distinctive HCM roots become simply another charismatically-orientated church in the market place.

Institutionalism is an ever-present tendency as a movement develops and there is evidence that the HCM is no exception. The early-HCM had sought to get back to a simplicity of believers gathering together but perhaps there has always been an in-built bias toward hierarchy with its 'rediscovery' of apostles and

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development of Pentecostalism.

4 *Fire*, 318.

5 Not only are various streams part of the Evangelical Alliance (with Covenant Ministries an exception), but some of the members of HCM churches hold key roles within the Alliance.

prophets.<sup>6</sup> I suggest that the HCM should heed its own history in order to challenge its future. By laying claim to a charismatic ecclesiology the radical nature of that ecclesiology needs to be re-examined and, if necessary, allowed to bring adjustment to its current shape.<sup>7</sup>

There is always a need to be radical and a vital question for the HCM streams to examine is what they believe is the minimum requirement needed in order to define a group of disciples as church. By so doing new models could be considered, and existing ways of being church could be challenged. Such an approach is necessary to avoid institutionalism and to ensure that the church is ready to respond to the emerging post-modern culture. The challenge of new models of church that do not fit the current apostolic structures is one issue, and it might be appropriate for those within the HCM to acknowledge that their forerunners were not actually radical enough. To go back to Scripture, as they did, and discover the shape of the Pauline churches might be an important step, but there might yet be a more radical examination that could allow new models and shapes to emerge. For the HCM this would mean a

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6 'Early Restorationism inevitably put 'apostles' at the centre of the ecclesiastical wheel, because... the apostle was seen as having the ultimate spiritual authority in the church' (Turner 'Ecclesiology', *Vox Evangelica*, Vol. XIX, 1989, 102.)

7 The simplicity of the Anabaptist-Mennonite structures of church are being allowed, in some quarters and to some extent, to challenge HCM perspectives, through such publications as *Anabaptism Today* and a recent work by Walfred Fahrer, *Building on the Rock* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1995).

radical re-examination of its leadership structure and style, even as far as questioning as to the necessity of the continuation of eldership and apostles. Unless the question is faced the tendency will be to move toward the sanctity of the office regardless of the charismatic anointing to fulfil the task, thus falling into the very situation that the HCM has itself historically criticised.

The HCM ideals are being tested by the growth of such phenomena as a push toward church planting movements among distinctive culture groups. Currently, the most challenging could well be that of planting churches within youth culture.<sup>8</sup> If this becomes successful it will not fit easily within the current HCM streams as the expression of church would be adapted toward a youth (and post-modern) culture. The issue for some churches will be to what extent such a movement would be controlled by them, and to what extent they would be empowered and released to develop an independent shape. If the former approach takes place then history could repeat itself, with another generation believing the restrictions were unacceptable and that the only choice was to leave, resulting in yet another expression of new church, perhaps then ironically viewed as sectarian by certain HCM streams!

Another issue that might well cause a challenge to HCM eschatology is teaching on 'spiritual warfare'. From the

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8 A conference under the title of 'Remix' was held at Aston University, July 5-7th., 1996 which drew together around 600 leaders within youth movements and churches, to examine the possibility of planting 'youth churches' which would have a very different flavour to existing new churches. A number of the HCM streams were represented.



Ichthus quarter there is an emphasis on territorial spirits,<sup>9</sup> which, in simplistic terms, teaches that the church is to 'bind' the territorial powers in order to gain a breakthrough for the Gospel. Such an approach might eventually be found to clash with the eschatological teaching of the increase of wickedness with accompanying martyrdom of believers. If the powers can be bound, the question must be raised as to the possibility of shaping the future in such a way that the church becomes victorious, indeed this could ironically, at least for Ichthus, lead to a post-millennialist approach. This teaching on territorial spirits coupled with a strong leaning toward the denial of the absolute foreknowledge of God must impact on the eschatological perspective, particularly within Ichthus and the stream it has most influenced, Pioneer.<sup>10</sup>

Alongside the above beliefs there is a growing conviction in a coming revival. Such expectations can have implications with regard to a belief in the purity of the church and, probably more significantly, expectations of an impact on society. This latter expectation can affect eschatology with an ever-present danger of the 'christianising' of society. The church must

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9 Forster wrote the foreword to the book Wagner edited, *Territorial Spirits* (Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991).

10 As proposed in a series of essays by Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker and David Basinger in the book *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994). By denying the absolute foreknowledge of God there is an explicit denial of a fixed future. The HCM streams, Ichthus and Pioneer are at the heart of planning a conference with Pinnock on this subject for November 1997.

have clarity as to how it will implement its numerical success, otherwise the old adage that 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely' could prove to be sadly true. Steven Land's advice to the Pentecostal churches could be well heeded by the HCM; he states that:

The church, where possible, must work to make structures more adequate to the life that is righteously ordered and intended by God. Structures cannot be sanctified in the same way as individuals can, but since the Spirit is at work in all creation, discerning action by the church can bear witness to and participate in those activities which more nearly embody righteousness, dignity and love for people.<sup>11</sup>

In summary, then, there is a challenge to the HCM that will come by looking to its own roots and if done honestly should rekindle the passion for a true charismatic expression of church. Such an expression will challenge all forms of false hierarchy and release a fresh empowering, thereby allow a diversity of church expressions to take place. Alongside this an ongoing commitment to world evangelisation and mission, with a working toward genuine relational unity can only bring about greater church health.

The HCM has never been better placed to embrace its future as a major contributor within the wider church scene. It no longer needs to be over-defensive, but with its distinctives can contribute toward the richness of diverse church expressions. However it is equally true

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<sup>11</sup>Land, 'A Passion for the Kingdom', *JPT* 1, 39.

that the HCM could quickly become divorced from its roots and simply become institutionalised, losing all ability to be self-critical, believing that numerical success justifies its existence and *modus operandi*.

Without losing its desire for radicality, it would also behove the HCM to accept the provisional nature of church, by which I mean that all churches have grown up in particular historical settings. This would then allow a reciprocal relationship with other church traditions.<sup>12</sup>

The HCM faces a number of challenges, but rather than erasing its distinctives, there needs to be a fresh embracing of distinctives, even if those distinctives have been somewhat revisioned. The HCM's current shape is being changed, but the danger is that the change will take place simply through numerical success. To avoid this danger the HCM must become faithful to its roots by allowing its current shape to be changed through a fresh empowering of new ideas. If this takes place then there will be some challenges that it can offer to the wider church.<sup>13</sup>

Those challenges will essentially be that of flexibility,

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<sup>12</sup>This reciprocal relationship is one of the proposals in G.R. Evans' book, *The Church and the Churches - Towards an ecumenical ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>13</sup>Writing concerning the Pentecostal movement, Jerome Boone says that 'we must be faithful to God's purpose for the Pentecostal movement and not compromise our diversity which is expressed in certain Pentecostal distinctives.' ('Community and Worship', *JPT* 8, 129). The HCM likewise needs to acknowledging its distinctives so that through them there is a contribution to the wider church.

grassroots empowering, of dismantling structures that no longer facilitate the gospel in our era, with the result that effective mission-orientated bodies are promoted. A demonstration that the HCM is committed to an eschatology that is mission-driven and relationally orientated will prove to be the lasting contribution that the HCM will make to the wider church. Such a challenge must be embraced, and such a challenge must be heard.

# Appendix 1

## Examples of Elitism in Pentecostal Literature

As examined in Chapters 3 and 4 the early-HCM and the LRM both made claims of elitism with such terminology as man-child company, overcomers etc.. When these claims were made in the LRM the wider (and now historical) Pentecostal movement distanced themselves from such claims, yet in the early Pentecostal literature there is evidence that similar views were also held within parts of that movement. Neither the LRM nor the HCM, in that sense, made any new claims. Perhaps this simply indicates that any movement that claims a fresh experience of the Spirit will lean toward making exaggerated claims.

Charles Parham, described by some as the ‘first Pentecostal theologian’ drew the distinction between the Bride and the Church: ‘Adam’s bride was a rib taken out of his side; the second Adam, Christ’s Bride, will be a small company... taken out of His Body, (the Church).’<sup>1</sup>

And for Parham there would be an even more elite group of people, the company of overcomers, the ‘man-child’:

The people who compose this company reach the highest perfection attainable for human beings planned by God through the atonement

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1 Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, 86, quoted in Faupel, *Everlasting*, 304.

of Jesus Christ. The Man-child being borne (sic) of the Bride whose perfection is beyond description, the Bride herself being taken as a rib near the heart of the body, the Church. They are the only company of people who take part in the Rapture, and are very few in number...

The Man-child is the Raptured saints and are called the first fruits unto God, being 144,000 in number. The Man-child is the Overcomers.<sup>2</sup>

The first full length book published in the wake of Asuza Street with the rather lengthy title, *The Spirit and the Bride: A Scriptural Presentation of the Operations, Manifestations, Gifts and Fruit of the Holy Spirit in Relation to His Bride with Special reference to the Latter Rain Revival*, also distinguished the 'ordinary' believer from the ones who would form part of the Bride, for only those who were sealed with the Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, would be part of the Bride.

The death of the old man does not marry us to Jesus, nor mark us as His bride, but simply liberates us from the bondage of the law... If that saint yields to all the wooings of the spirit, Christ will place upon that one 'the seal' - the engagement ring - which is no other than the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.<sup>3</sup>

Faupel goes on to quote the following works from the early Pentecostal era as presenting a similar

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2 Ibid., 90.

3 George Taylor (Dunn, NC: The Author, 1907), 120f.

perspective: A.G. Ward, *Soul Food for Hungry Hearts*, Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, pp. 16-17; F.L. Crawford's article 'Preparing for Himself a Bride', in *The Apostolic Faith*, Portland, 1909, p. 2; and E.A. Sexton, 'The Bride of Christ' in *The Bridegroom's Messenger*, 1910, p. 1.<sup>4</sup> These early views disappeared from mainstream Pentecostalism but resurface in the LRM and again in the early HCM. Faupel in his examination of the early eschatology of the Pentecostal movement, suggests also that some of the forerunners of Pentecostalism were already holding such views:

John Alexander Dowie, Frank Weston Sandford, and Charles Fox Parham all saw themselves as Elijah-like figures who like John the Baptist would prepare the way for the coming of Christ. Each saw his movement as the instrument which would ignite a world-wide revival which would call forth Christ's bride from the church and warn the nations of impending judgment.<sup>5</sup>

The above evidence shows that the HCM elitism fits the pattern of previous charismatic / pentecostal movements, and through the link with the LRM that the theology of the HCM was not entirely novel.

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4 Faupel, *Everlasting*, 26, n. 26.

5 *Ibid.*, 186.

## Appendix 2

### Other 'Restorationist' Approaches

A belief in restoration is a belief in progress toward the goal, and although I do not suggest that the following two perspectives embrace the restorationist ideal in the same way as the HCM, it is interesting to note that there is a strong desire to believe in progress.

### Peter Hocken and church restoration

Peter Hocken, a Catholic Priest, in a book of reflection on the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements,<sup>1</sup> sees a very different pattern emerging from an examination of church history than do most HCM writers. He describes the expanding circle of God's blessing as four surprises: beginning with the Pentecostals, then with the historic Protestant denominations, followed by renewal in the Catholic church, and more recently with Messianic Judaism.<sup>2</sup> This sequence bears great meaning for Hocken who suggests that 'there is clear evidence of the Pentecostal-charismatic outpouring of the Spirit in the twentieth century having a unitive purpose'.<sup>3</sup> He notes that the 'order of surprises of the Spirit in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements may well indicate the strategy and order of the Lord in this

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1 *The Glory and The Shame* (Guildford: Eagle, 1994).

2 See particularly Chapter 2, 'The Surprises of the Holy Spirit', *ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*, 82.



process of ecumenical reconciliation'.<sup>4</sup> His interpretation, he acknowledges is somewhat different to that which is popular among Pentecostals, but he suggests that their schema (original apostolic fullness and power, then decline, followed by phases of restoration) was fashioned in a separatist atmosphere to which neither Martin Luther nor John Wesley would have subscribed. His sequence is restorative, and although 'full transformation will only come with the Parousia, there are strong grounds for believing that there will be significant reconciliation before then', for it is inconceivable 'that Jesus could return and find all the different Churches divided as they are at present'.<sup>5</sup>

Hocken has to wrestle with the place that the 'non-denominations' have within such a sequence as they do not fit with his scheme. Honestly, he states that they are a paradox, but suggests, that if we maintain this paradox, we will resist the temptation to find the full meaning of God's renewing-restoring purpose in one aspect of the outpouring of the Spirit to the exclusion of the other. The challenge then is mutual: that the historic churches do not see such movements as the HCM as 'the latest manifestation of misguided sectarianism' but are seen as a provocation to change; and that all new movements seek to anchor any new life in structures that serve people, such as are found in the older Christian traditions.<sup>6</sup>

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4 *Ibid.*, 156f.

5 *Ibid.*, 165f.

6 See particularly Chapter 22, 'Back to the Non-Denominational', *ibid.*

Through appreciating the work of the Spirit in new movements, he can genuinely give a call for mutual appreciation of the different groups and therefore for unity, but it remains clear that any restoration of the church is understood institutionally and ecumenically, and not simply along a believer's church model.<sup>7</sup>

Hocken's interpretation of church history is in contrast to that of the HCM and yet there is a 'restoration' principle involved: the church begins with Jewish believers but there has been a historic decline through division, however now through the Spirit there is a movement toward unity again, the most recent sign being the rise of Messianic Judaism. His approach indicates that history can be read in different ways and that a belief in 'restoration' is not the exclusive property of sectarian groups.

## **Theologians and 'restoration'**

There is a belief in biblical theology that through study, discovery and dialogue it is possible to progressively understand a particular theology more accurately. Indeed it is genuinely possible to suggest that theologians know more about the world of Jesus, and the biblical background to his messianic call, than he did

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7 Hocken suggests that there are at least three different types of church bodies: 1) the ancient churches of East and West; 2) the Protestant churches that broke away; and 3) the free churches founded on the principle of voluntary association. The HCM fits in the last category and is the only model that is understood to be 'church' by the HCM. (See Hocken, p. 194 for his categorisation, and Wallis, *The Radical Christian*, 101-136, for the HCM view.)

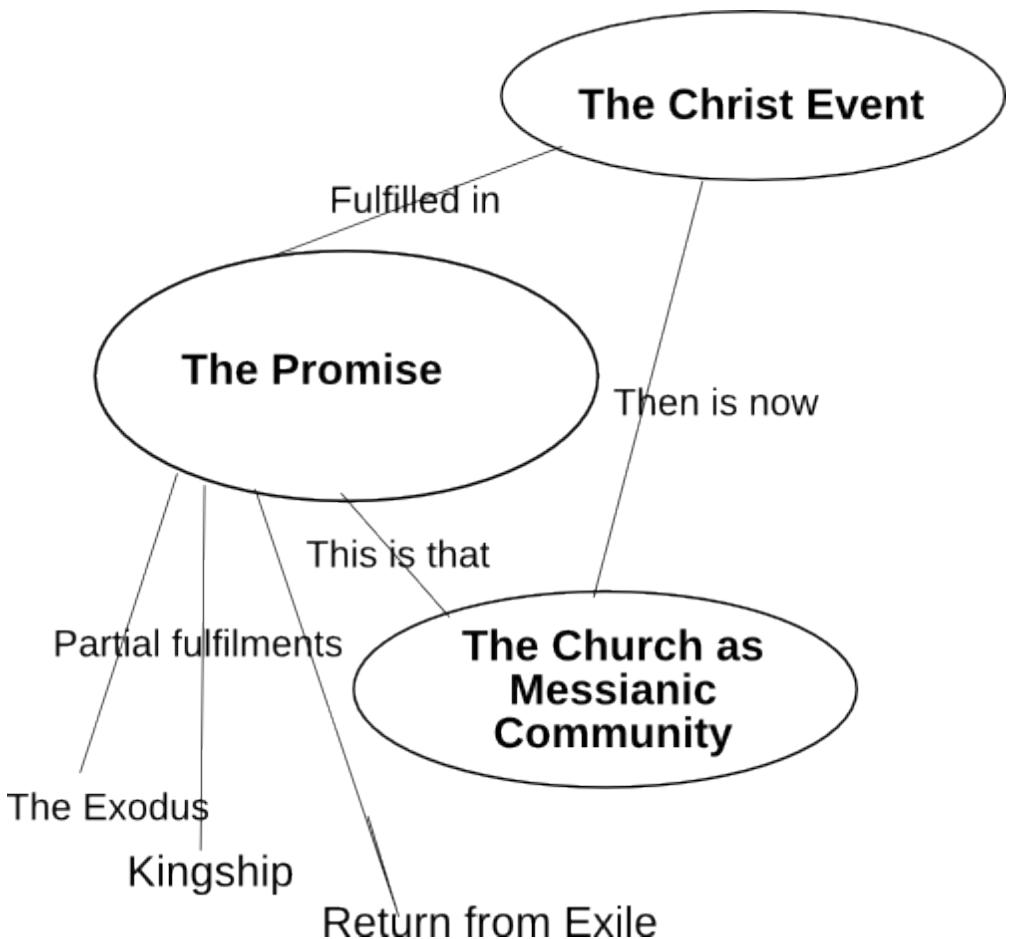
himself! At one stage many reformed theologians held that Paul had not been properly understood until the Reformation and the initial breakthrough that came with Luther's belief in justification by faith. However since the late 1970s with the work of E. P. Sanders, Heikki Räisänen, James Dunn and others the understanding of Paul has gone through a major shift. Arguably today we are clearer on Pauline theology than Luther, and perhaps even clearer than Paul himself. As theology is constantly being renewed there is even the hope that there will yet be more understanding to come: theologically the understanding will equal or even surpass that of the first-century apostolic community.

Certainly both the above beliefs in progress are different to the restorationism of the HCM but they, at least, illustrate that the concept of restorationism is not an all-together alien concept, and is perhaps a natural way to try and give meaning to one's existence and work.

## Appendix 3

### A Proposed Basis for a Prophetic Hermeneutic

The diagram that follows is intended to reflect the discussion in Chapters 8 and 9 on Revisioning HCM Eschatology.



This proposal suggests that the prophetic promises of Scripture find their fulfilment in Christ and only ever in a partial way within historical events; yet there is a place to say that an event that takes place within the Messianic community can be a fulfilment of prophetic Scripture ('this is that'); however, this will again only be in a partial way as it will not be the fulfilment. The community is related to the *eschaton* by the Spirit therefore eschatological events can also take place in history: so one can claim 'then is now', that is end-time events are now taking place. Such an approach means that historical events particularly within the church can be invested with prophetic meaning, but can never be said to be the fulfilment. The fulfilment in the church is nevertheless real because of the presence of the eschatological Spirit of Christ, yet it is only ever partial and derived, for Christology must not be collapsed into ecclesiology, nor eschatology into pneumatology. Although all four doctrinal areas are distinct they are also intrinsically related and the relating 'element' must be the presence of the Spirit of Jesus.

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