

# Brian Hathaway

## Beyond Renewal – The Kingdom of God

Word (UK) 1990

Notes by Alison Morgan April 2005

Written from New Zealand. Readable; based on experience of a church in Auckland which went from pre-renewal to startling growth; primary idea is that renewal is for the kingdom, not for experience. An excellent resource for a traditional church beginning to explore its need for renewal.

### **Introduction**

His own experience – reading Romans 8.4, 'truth penetrated my spirit'. Different ministry ever since – above all, a freshness and authority in teaching the word of God. This book is also an attempt to point out to charismatic churches that the results of renewal should go beyond the four walls of the church and out into the local communities. The central theme of Jesus' ministry was the Kingdom of God.

*We tell this story, not to glorify a congregation or any people in this congregation. Rather, it is an attempt to seek to encourage those who desire a deeper work of the Holy Spirit in their personal lives and churches. Churches that seem locked into stagnation and decline need not be afraid of renewal, but should be prepared to embrace the helpful aspects of this movement and work them out within a church framework. Also that those congregations who have experienced renewal and are now perhaps suffering from ingrownness and lack of direction may be able to clarify and outwork the issues which the Holy Spirit seems to be bringing to many churches both in this country and around the world. Things can be changed. God answers prayer and is gracious and faithful to His people. Fresh breath can ignite dull people and sweep through barren places creating growth and bringing blessing. A new vision is essential. There's a community to touch and a world to reach for Christ. Old bones can live!*

## Part I : Renewal

### **1. Renewal**

Renewal in a Brethren church – hesitation over some of the ways charismatic renewal was expressed. They noticed life and excitement, fresh music, joyous singing; but also a certain predictability – we will now sing in the Spirit – and some excesses. Initial conclusion: hands may be raised, but only half mast!!

### **2. The ministry of the Spirit**

Being filled, blessed, empowered, released, baptised, drenched, touched, anointed, renewed in the Spirit – what happens to people already Christians, already serving, already born again.

1 irrefutable fact: Jesus performed his ministry through the power and work of the HS. He used the same resources we have – not different ones. Resources for spiritual growth:

- o Prayer
- o Scripture
- o Faith
- o Ministry of the HS

Billy Graham asked, how much Christian activity would continue unaffected if God removed his HS from the earth? A good question to ask oneself of what one does!

### **3. The gifts of the Spirit**

Are some still in, some now out? If so, which?...

Prophecy – the gift of prophecy in 1 Cor 14 and the role of prophet in Eph 4 are clearly different.

Prophecy is inspired, yes – but infallible, no!

Miracles:

*However where we read the word 'miracles', the Greek phrase used — *energemata dunameon* — could be translated as — 'workings of powers' or 'energising of power'. To be a vehicle for an energising work of God's power does not seem to be nearly as threatening as a performer of a miracle. Jesus also has this phrase used of Him in Mark 6:14 where some people were saying that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead, 'That was why miraculous powers are at work in Him.'*

*In verse 6 of 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the same Greek word when he says, 'There are different kinds of energisings (*energematon*), but the same God energises (*energon*) all of them in all people.' Or in verse 11 — 'All of these (gifts) are the energising (*energei*) of one and the*

same Spirit and he gives them to each one as he determines.' Maybe if the translators had used this terminology rather than miracles, we would have felt more comfortable about this area.

Similar terminology translated as 'working', is used several other times in the New Testament - Ephesians 1:19-20, 'the energising of his mighty strength.' Ephesians 3:7, Paul was 'a servant of this gospel. . . through the energising of his power'. Here, 'energising of his power' could well be translated 'miracle,' Paul was a servant of the gospel through a miracle! Ephesians 3:20, 'He is able to do more than we can ask or think according to his power which energises us'. Colossians 1:29, 'To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully energises me.' Is it not conceivable, that the Spirit of God, from time to time, gives special ability (energy) to get a task done, or to bring a radical change in a situation, maybe a healing, or some other supernatural event? This certainly seems to have been so in the case of Christ. We read 'people touched him because power was coming from him and healing them all' (Luke 6:19). On another occasion Jesus said 'Someone touched me; I know power has gone out of me' (Luke 8:46). Or what does it mean when we read, 'The power of the Lord was present to heal?' (Luke 5:17).

For many of us such an explanation is quite foreign to our Western, non-miraculous framework. It borders on the metaphysical and leaves numerous unanswered questions. To understand how such an activity of the Holy Spirit operates, or give adequate scientific explanation is difficult but we must address the Biblical record. Is it possible that we are dealing here with divine energy which can apparently operate through human vessels. p42-43

Learning to use the gifts of the Spirit – practical guidelines.

#### **4. Change**

General Booth (Salvation Army): 'you can't change the future without disturbing the present', 49.

Bringing change: teach it (one of God's unchanging characteristics is that he delights in doing new things); point out that maturity means change; pray for ministry of the HS; communicate with people; use papers to present positions; model the changes yourself; run with the runners (2.5% of a congregation are innovators, 13.5% are early adapters – work with them); try it out for 6 months; use questionnaires; teach on the area needing change; be patient with people...

#### **5. Reaching into the community**

They appointed a couple whose job it was to do good works in the community. Concern for the needs of people in the community comes out of renewal. The gospel has a social dimension (not the same as being a social gospel). African proverb: 'empty bellies have no ears'. Maslow's hierarchy, 5 levels, and lower ones must be met first. p 64. 'Christians have to be the good news before they have the right to speak the good news'. Credibility is primarily gained by loving and sacrificially serving other people. The modern church doesn't serve the hurting community.

#### **6. Words, deeds and signs**

Evangelism by words – churches have always recognised the need for a verbal declaration of truth.

Evangelism by deeds: Proclaiming the gospel by deeds is often the way to a person's heart:

- o Mt 5.16 good works glorify the Father
- o 2 Cor 9.8 we abound to every good work
- o Gal 6.10 do good to everyone, especially those of the household of faith
- o 1 Thess 5.15 do good to one another
- o Titus 2.7 show a pattern of good works
- o Heb 10.24 provoke one another to love and good works
- o Eph 2.9 created to do good works, prepared in advance for us to do

Not the same as justification by works...

Evangelism by signs – healing

Need for balance. Evangelicals do words, Liberals do deeds, Pentecostals do signs... Romans 15.18-19 'by words and deeds, by the power of signs and miracles, and by the power of the HS'. individual believers often have a bias towards one of these ways of presenting the gospel; together we need all. 'Words proclaim the truth about God, deeds show the love of God and signs demonstrate the power of God', 74.

#### **7. Wanted – unifying theme**

The bigger picture into which renewal fits is this: the kingdom of God.

*To be sure, we must place Christ central to all we do, whether that be evangelism, social concern, work, spiritual warfare, service, worship or in the use of the gifts of the Spirit. But to what end result?*

*Slowly the bigger picture came into focus, as if the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle were finally coming together giving us a total view, a unifying theme. This theme was the KINGDOM OF GOD.*

*Viewing things from the perspective of the Kingdom of God has enabled us to integrate all that we have seen develop. No longer do we need to debate whether evangelism should take precedence over social concern. Both were an integral part of the Kingdom of God and had to be addressed. No longer were we dealing with a number of disjointed aspects of God's truth. We have been able to see them as a unit, a whole. They were all part of God's agenda for this planet. That agenda is the re-establishment of His Kingdom rule in the lives of human beings and in human society. Social concern, evangelism, spiritual gifts, ministry to the poor, spiritual warfare, making disciples, are all necessary if we are to participate fully in God's agenda. 79*

## Part II : Beyond Renewal

### 8. The Kingdom of God

To understand the gospel, one must understand the Kingdom of God. Lord's Prayer – your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. The kingdom of God is seen when the will of God is being done.

Romans 14.17, the kingdom of God is .. a matter .. of righteousness, joy and peace in the HS'. Righteous leads to peace, peace to joy.

The Kingdom – here but not fully. Incompleteness : even Jesus did not manage to convince everyone that he was the Messiah, and it is the same with the current ministry of the HS through us. The age of the Kingdom is the age of grace – people can accept or reject it.

Jesus' view of end time determined how he lived here and now. So should ours. Newbigin on the kingdom: 'it is not the lantern which the traveller in the dark carries in his hand; it is the glow on his face which reflects the coming dawn', 101.

### 9. Evidence of the kingdom of God

Billy Graham was asked if he would run for President, and said no. Why, was the job too big? No, it was too small; God had called him to something much bigger...

### 10. Conflict of the kingdoms

Bible acknowledges there are powerful spiritual forces at work on this planet; there are 2 kingdoms. Matt 12.22-28, where they accuse Jesus of driving out demons by Beelzebub – he says there is not one kingdom but two, Satan's kingdom and the kingdom of God. The whole of human history can be explained from this vantage point. Areas of human life affected by the Fall:

- o Human relationships
- o Work and economics
- o Sex
- o Our innate desire to worship God
- o The church

Few refs to Satan in the OT, lots in the NT – as if the coming of Jesus flushed out Satan and revealed the degree to which his kingdom had influenced this planet. Light showed up darkness, and demons screamed in the presence of God.

### 11. Money, materialism and the kingdom of God

A pastor from Zaire explained to him that whereas they mix their faith with occultism without realising, so we mix ours with materialism without realising. And we do! How many congregations have no financial difficulties? Have no lack of available people? Why are we all so busy? How much more could be achieved for the kingdom if there was a greater release of finance and possessions??

Money is a resource – see the parable of the shrewd manager in Luke 16. Non-Christians are shrewd in how they use their money to further their causes. We aren't.

Test: when we need say a new car, we ask ourselves 'what can I afford' – and money is making the decision. Should we spend all we can afford to?

The power of money is due to 3 reasons:

1. no part of our life is immune from its influence/demands
2. it affects all ages
3. it caters to our need for security – which is fundamental to us.

In 1988 someone calculated that Christians gave 1.7% of their income to God – almost all to work in their own country of origin. Yet as we spend millions, Christianity in the West declines.

Some statistics

- 250,000 people go blind each year for the want of 10 cents
- worth of vitamin C.
- 40,000 children around the world die each year from the lack of simple needs.
- 100,000,000 children around the world are living on the streets today.
- One billion people around the world are destitute.
- The 37 poorest countries in the world have recently been forced to make a 50% cut in health and a 25% cut in education because of the high interest rates to the West.
- Half the world goes to bed hungry each night.
- By the year 2000, one quarter of the world's population will be living in city slums or squatter settlements.
- North Americans consume 5 times more grain than Asians; use twice as much protein than their bodies need and 80 million of them are overweight!

- *One quarter of the world's population controls four fifths of its resources. Putting it the other way, three quarters of the world's population has to get by on one fifth of the world's resources.*
- *6% of the world's population consume 40% of its resources and many of these are non-renewable.*

God gives us his perspective:

- At creation : God gave Adam and Eve 4 instructions:
  1. conservation – 'replenish'
  2. exploration – 'subdue'
  3. administration – 'rule over'
  4. cooperation – 'dress and keep it'

Deut 17, kings should not acquire lots of horses; of wives; of silver and gold (16-17)
- through the laws of Israel
- through the prophets
- through John the Baptist, Luke 3
- through Jesus – Jesus spoke about this issue more than any other. Refs p.140-41

Riches exclude people from the kingdom; strangle their growth; blind us to the needs of others; compete against God's authority; enslave us; supplant our values; create anxiety; desensitize us towards our spiritual needs; are addictive.

Advice:

- live more simply
- resist advertising and develop sales resistance
- reject credit
- budget carefully
- give regularly
- abandon wrong use of possessions
- break the cycle – give stuff away.

A prayer : Prov 30.8-9 – give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food that is convenient for me, lest I be full and deny you .. or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of the Lord my God in vain.'

## **12. The church and the kingdom of God**

*The Greek word most often used to describe the Church in the New Testament is ekklesia. Unfortunately in translating this as church' we have lost something of the real meaning behind the word. Literally the Greek word means 'the called out ones' and was commonly used in the first century to describe a group of people who had come into a public place for a particular purpose. The Greek version of the Old Testament also sometimes uses the word ekklesia to describe the people of Israel. The early Christians used a word indicating a public meeting of some sort, which sharply contrasts with its use today. Now most Church activities are conducted behind closed doors and are not very accessible to the public, To replace the word 'Church' in the New Testament with the phrase 'the called out ones' is a very constructive exercise. Why did the writers of the New Testament use this word? No doubt the foremost reason was because it identified a group of people (Christians) called out of their homes to a local meeting place. Is it not also possible that it indicated a group of people who had been called out of the kingdom of darkness and called into the Kingdom of God (Col 1:12-13)?*

## **13. Putting it all together**

We need a new congregational model, one which:

- embraces a theology of the kingdom of God
- is open to the continual renewing work of the HS (recognising that the gifts of the Spirit are given not just to produce to a healthy congregation, but so that a healthy congregation might seek to bring God's restoring activity to the surrounding society)
- is involved in social concern
- is committed to evangelism
- reduces congregational activities to an essential minimum
- identifies and releases people's gifts (in both congregation and in community)
- has a radical view of money/possessions
- assesses results in terms of the kingdom of God

His church has lots of community ministries – people trying to use specific gifts, skills, trades, to minister to specific needs within the community. There are some important principles here: autonomy, adaptability, self-sufficiency, spirituality (must be a spiritual dimension), seeking opportunities for prayer with people; networking with other community ministries.

People can get involved at different levels – personal, family, small group, congregational, multi-congregational. Priorities should be biological family first, church family second, world family third.

How to start – assess the needs, the resources you have, what God wants you to do and whether he wants you to do it now.

Appendix 3 gives examples of community ministries.