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Greetings From South Africa! Jewel van der Merwe

My daughter, Charissa and I have been in South Africa since August and have been amazed at the goodness of the Lord. Whenever one takes a step of faith, there are wonders to behold in the vast sea of God's mercies and un-ending faithfulness.

Returning to South Africa after an absence of 16 years has been challenging and rewarding. The church scene has been influenced by every wind of doctrine blowing across the seas from America, Australia, England, etc. In the 16 years since we left there have been dramatic changes. A new South Africa has emerged bringing with it a transformational process with far-reaching implications in the global perspective. The days are filled with the national television exposing the foibles of the past. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is digging into the atrocities that were committed by all sides in an effort to "clean house" and bring all the guilt into the open for "reconciliation". This thinking encapsulates what the globalists and ecumenists of the world have been saying for a long time. Note what a New Age Catholic priest, Matthew Fox said some years ago in this book, "The Cosmic Christ":

"Deep ecumenical possibilities emerge when we shift from the quest for the historical Jesus to the quest for The Cosmic Christ. This shift requires making mysticism central to our faith once again. What the human race needs today is mystical solidarity. We need to pray together in deep and ancient mystical ways.

"For this mystical solidarity to happen, some confession on sin is in order. Jesus wisely advised that if one is offering a gift at the altar and realizes one's brother or sister has something against one then one should leave the gift at the altar and be reconciled first. Reconciliation is in order today at the level of religions themselves. It is time that Western, white, European Christianity apologized publicly to the native peoples of America, Africa, Asia, and Europe and asked for forgiveness. With this reconciliation, we might gather at our altars with power once again. . . . confession is good for the soul, including the soul of a people. Today we need public confessions from entire traditions, not just from individuals. With the forgiveness and letting go that is sure to come from such confession, deep ecumenism will be free to happen.

"Today we can respond to the challenge deep ecumenism poses. Does the fact that the Christ became incarnate in Jesus exclude the Christ's becoming incarnate in others – Lao-tzu or Buddha or Moses or Sarah or Sojourner Truth or Gandhi or me or you?"

Deep ecumenism is the very matrix in which the Cosmic Christ is nourished and comes to birth.

It is amazing to note that mysticism is: 1) integral to this awakening; 2) basic to this global renaissance; and 3) represents the depth of religious traditions the world over.

With the strong ecumenical emphasis we are seeing the churches fall like dominos to this call of reconciliation.

When Mao Tse-Tung took over in China he built up a theory to justify the way he saw to change China. He realized that the people's thinking had to be changed and this was not done simply by argument. They had to be re-educated. Words had to be redefined. "Sinners" were those who associated with foreigners. "Repentance" was to be sincerely sorry for what had been done against the Chinese people. "Changing one's nature" was a change of ideas. "Conversion" was acting upon your new belief. Psychology was used on the masses. They were told that they had committed sins against the people, but if they realized their mistakes and were "reconciled" they could come to the "party" and be loved and forgiven.

Yes, they were processed in much the same way that the church is being "processed" today.

Ecumenical organizations such as the Promisekeepers are using reconciliation as a catalyst to pull together races and denominations. At their rallies they are presenting racial and denominational standards. But who's standard? Is this a standard that just blames the white European for all the ills of society? Does this standard seek to nullify the Reformation?

Are the walls that are coming down actually the walls of truth? The truth is that one finds reconciliation only at the foot of the cross where man is reconciled to God. When that truly occurs, reconciliation with our fellow man will be certain.

The direction the church is being led is indeed strange. The Word of God is very clear in its warning of false Christ's and false teachers. South Africa is reeling from the onslaught of another gospel. Our preceding articles from England give an excellent background for our coming January/February issue which will show the direction the church is being led into the next millennium. The cycle of the Manifest Sons of God had come to its 50th year – which they would herald as the Year of Jubilee. Terminology has changed, but the message is the same. Manifested Sons of God is now called THE BRIDE. Latter day prophets and newly commissioned apostles are going forth issuing what they call PRESENT DAY truth. They believe their "thus saith the Lord" is on equal par with scripture. The new apostles believe that they will create a great unified church that will actually replace all Christ denominations. This subject will be dealt with in more depth in the January/February, 1998 Discernment newsletter.

"Bread & Games" (1)
Reflections on the British Church
By Tricia Tillin

Part Three:
The Latter Rain and the Restoration Movement in Britain

Introduction

The second article in this series broke off at the transition period between the breakdown of the Anglican Renewal in the UK, and the coming of "shepherding" which impacted the early Restoration fellowships.

Shepherding (examined later in this article) was a major shift in doctrine, but it was not the only nor the most important factor in shaping the teaching of what was to become the Restoration Movement. A stream of thought had been feeding into the 19th century Holiness groups, and it led to the formation of various Apostolic churches in Britain and America, and sprang out with renewed vigour in the Canadian Latter Rain Revival of the 1940's.

This revelation occupied a parallel track to most of the traditional Church doctrine. While evangelicals concentrated on getting individuals saved, this teaching, which I shall call "restorationism" for want of a better description, looked to a greater goal – that of transforming the Church into the One New Man, Christ incarnate in His Body.

A necessary part of this transformation was to be the restoration of the spiritual gifts, powers, authority and structure of the early Church, with emphasis on the renewal of apostles and prophets as leaders bringing the Church to complete visible unity, purity and glory – the supposed goal of "fullness". The "overcomers" of this super-church would ultimately attain sinless perfection so that they could from the heavenlies as Christ's Executive Agent over the earth. It would result in the restoration of all creation, and a golden age of peace and righteousness for all.

Restoration teaching, many times rejected by traditional churches, waited patiently for its time to take centre stage. That time arrived (as did so many other things) in the turbulent post-war era of the 1960's.

It was a time of expectation and hope for Christians when changes were in the air. Many dormant Christians were coming to life and finding fulfillment in informal fellowship, prayer, praise and the lively new worship of the Renewal. At first this was uncoordinated and had no apparent leadership. Independent house-groups sprang up containing small knots of renewed Christians who has left their denominations.

The Anglican Renewal Movement, as we saw in Part Two, tried valiantly to pastor the Renewal but floundered on ecumenism, formalism and their loyalty to the historic denominations. This left thousands of Christians seeking an alternative. They were like ripe fruit hanging on the branches, and it was the Restoration Movement that came along and plucked them.

The Hidden Stream

The House-Church movement, as it was known at first, ran almost unnoticed alongside both the Anglican Renewal Movement and the independent Pentecostal groups in the 50's and 60's.

The differences between the Anglican Renewal movement and the House-Church movement were not at first apparent. There was the same desire for informal meetings, freedom of expression, new songs, praise and worship, body ministry. Members of both groups claimed to have received a new infilling of the Holy Spirit, and to be practicing the gifts. But underneath all this there was a great sea-change taking place in the area of doctrine. Restorationist, or Latter Rain revival teachings, implanted at an early stage were a major influence within the heart of this group.

The Latter Rain Comes to England

Initially, the Canadian Latter Rain teachings had been brought to England by leading figures such as Cecil Cousen (1913-89), a founding member of the UK Apostolic Church, and an associate of Smith Wigglesworth. In 1949 Cousen went to Ontario and came under the influence of the Latter Rain pioneers. On his return to England he tried, with some success, to introduce the doctrines into his church, but was finally expelled from the Apostolic Church in 1953 as a result of his new beliefs. Nonetheless, he became a respected leader and teacher in the budding Charismatic Movement, and was on the advisory council of the Fountain Trust.

Secondly, Arthur Wallis (1923-88) who later became known as the “father of the charismatic movement” incorporated into his teaching the latter-rain beliefs about a massive endtimes outpouring which he identified as Joel’s “outpouring upon all flesh”. If there was to be an eschatological golden age in which believers were empowered and united, and millions were to be harvested into the Church, then this went far beyond personal renewal, or even the renewal of the current structures. The idea began to be circulated that a whole “new wineskin” had to be made in order to carry the new wine of the charismatic revival. Things were moving on from “renewal” toward “restoration”.

In the late 50’s and early 60’s Wallis convened a number of important conferences with Cecil Cousen and another pioneer, David Lillie, who had come to similar conclusions about the restoration of the Church through the books of G. H. Lang.

While neither of these men took on board the more heretical excesses of Latter Rain doctrine, they did imbibe enough to form a new doctrine of the restoration of the Church in the endtimes, the government of apostles and prophets, and the role of the “overcomers” in bringing in the Kingdom on earth. Lillie wrote:

Our goal is not Pentecost but the Kingdom of God. . . the prophetic word which has been passed down to us from the apostles and prophets who stood at the door of the new age points forward with the unwavering confidence to the dawning of that new day when the overcoming saints shall take the kingdom... (2)

In his book “Beyond Charisma” David Lillie reveals that the aspirations of the Restorationists were much more ambitious than personal renewal. The old institutions “are Babylon, the Great Harlot” and they had to go. A new universal Body would arise, “*a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing*”, perfected and transformed into the One New Man, the Corporate Christ who is to bring in the Kingdom.

The spiritual renewal... is perhaps the heralding of the dawning of the church’s new day. The New Man is yet to appear in splendour in the midst of the churches – as a great light shining in the darkness of this world!” (3)

In Lillie’s thinking, the New Age of Kingdom Rule would be brought in by these glorified Christians, after a decisive victory over the heavenly powers, and *not even the powers of death could withstand them.*” (4)

These ideas cut across conventional pentecostal/evangelical doctrine. Lillie writes:

“...it is believed [by dispensationalists and others] that we have now reached the final “Laodicean” period when the churches are marked by indifference (“neither hot nor cold”) ...this depressing interpretation which is used by devotees of the failure syndrome has nothing really to commend it exegetically... there is nothing inevitable about apostasy. ... we are not shut

in to a bleak prospect of universal apostasy, or even of “laodicean lukewarmness” simply because these conditions were found among some of the churches mentioned in Revelation 2 & 3. (5)

Lillie stated that the Charismatic renewal *“has nothing to do with schemes to refurbish denominational structures, nor with attempts to build up some sort of charismatic super-Church. It has everything to do with the coming forth of the People of God, as in Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones”.*

It was inevitable, then, that such as Lillie and Cousen would fall out with such as Harper and The Fountain Trust. Although they worked together in the early years, there came about what Lillie calls “irreconcilable differences” between those who wanted “renewal” within the Church structure, and those who believed in “restoration” to fullness. Lillie sums it up perfectly:

Within the Fountain Trust milieu, the conviction that it was the purpose of the Holy Spirit to “renew the historic churches” became an established principle. This, clearly, was totally incompatible with our “restoration vision”, and led inevitably to the parting of the ways.” (6)

Arthur Wallis added to the refrain. In 1974 he stated: *I see no future for denominations, but a glorious future for the Body of Christ”.* (7) Turning from the Anglican Renewal Movement, they next hitched a ride on the house-church wagon. It is undeniable that the 1960’s Devon meetings of Lillie and Wallis and their vision of apostolic authority in a restored New-Testament Church is what initially sparked the “restoration” revolution. (8)

A Mighty Outpouring

Arthur Wallis completed his first book *In The Day of Thy Power* in 1956 and still today his book is recognised as seminal to the restoration Movement. The first editions contained a chapter on the “Latter Rain of Promise” in which Wallis preached the classic “Joel’s Prophecy” outpouring on the Church. He writes:

“...we should expect before the Coming of Christ a season of mighty outpourings, eclipsing all that the Church has experienced since the Reformation, and only comparable in character and in power with the former rain of the early church.” (9)

Wallis’ book as a whole follows the pattern laid down by the earlier Latter Rain revivalists, though it avoids the deeper heresies of Manifested Sons teaching. It includes sections on restructuring the Church, the Elijah Ministry of preparation, warfare in the heavenlies, and judgement for those who rejected the coming revival. On the purpose of God for the Church, Wallis writes:

“God has a grander and greater purpose for this age than simply saving souls from hell; he is bringing “sons unto glory”... He is forging an instrument, glorious and holy, that shall rule and administer the world in the coming age...” (10)

Thus he like David Lillie taught that the Church had to be purified, unified and restored so that it could become “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing...” (Ephesians 5:27).

All of this is familiar to us now, but then was couched in a revivalist zeal that seemed very attractive. Wallis was asked to speak on the subject of the New Testament church at the

Devon conferences where of course soul-mates in doctrine, David Lillie and Cecil Cousen were delighted to see the restoration doctrine given a public airing. At their third and final conference in 1965 (on the theme of “Apostolic Commission”) not only Wallis, but Hugh Thompson and Barney Coombs attended, men who would become leading figures in the later Restoration churches.

At this time the revivalists from all camps were trying to work together. Wallis in particular flitted from Michael Harper’s Anglican Renewal meetings to conferences with Lillie and Cousen, to house meetings with the small band of independent leaders such as John Noble and Gerald Coates who were just beginning to set up fellowships of their own; Graham Perrins was also involved from an early stage, having been present at Lillie’s meetings. It was only later, as the different visions hardened into dogma, that the groups went their separate ways.

More Latter Rain Influence

Here I need to point out yet more input from “sonship/latter-rain” teaching at the very heart of the nascent Restoration Movement.

Bryn Jones and America

Attending one of the Devon conferences of Lillie and Wallis (with which Cecil Cousen was also closely involved) was a newly-converted Welshman called Bryn Jones who was to become a leading figure in the Restoration Movement.

Bryn Jones and his brother Keri were born in Aberdare, Wales. Bryn was converted in 1957 and the following year, having been baptised in the Spirit, he joined the Assemblies of God. Shortly after his conversion he travelled to Europe and returned in 1966 via the States. This was the first contact between the American and British charismatic fellowships, so gives us an important marker for what followed. **The contact was with Robert Ewing from Waco, Texas who had a church that had come for the Latter Rain Revival in Canada.**

Later, in 1971, Ewing invited Bryn Jones to preach at a convention in Waco. Jones also preached at a number of other churches, including Ewing’s home church in St. Louis, Missouri. By the 1980’s that church numbered 4,500 members and considered Bryn Jones its Apostle. It was later discovered that Ern Baxter had direct links with many of the churches Bryn Jones visited in the States. Given the involvement of Ewing and Baxter with the Latter Rain Revival, it seems obvious that their teachings helped to formulate early Restoration thinking.

Honor Oak and T. Austin Sparks

Secondly, there is the input from the sonship teachings of T. Austin Sparks. His books, written from the 1930’s to the 1950’s, and drawing from earlier sources than the Canadian LR revival, speak of the now-familiar concepts of “fullness”, the One New Man, the Corporate Christ, Unity and the Restoration and Glorification of the Body.

Sparks’ teachings were disseminated by “Witness & Testimony” based at Honor Oak, in London. The Community there was dominated by T. Austin Sparks’ teaching, and was thoroughly restorationist without being pentecostal.

An elder at Honor Oak in the 50’s and 60’s was a man called Maurice Smith, later a prime mover in the Restoration Movement. He and other Honor Oak members attended Gerald Coates’s home church meetings in the late 1960’s. Maurice Smith himself left Honor Oak in 1967

(with Ted Crick, of whom more later) and made contact with many independent house meetings and itinerant leaders, forging the links that would become the organisation we know today.

It was Maurice Smith who organised the important Westwatch Conference (West Sussex) in 1967, which was attended by many Restoration leaders – men like Roger Forster, Graham Perrins, Peter Lyne and Hugh Thompson and of course Gerald Coates and Arthur Wallis.

At Westwatch, the Restoration doctrine was preached with fervour. Arthur Wallis's vision of a massive endtime revival leading to the demise of denominations, full Church unity, and reorganisation into the new Apostolic Church was incorporated into plans for a British Charismatic Network that would bring about these ideals in a practical way. The Restoration Movement was being born! But the milk of its earliest diet was certainly "sonship" and "fullness".

By 1969, Maurice Smith (ex-Honor Oak) was trying to organise joint meetings for all the independent charismatic groups, and he wrote to eighteen leaders calling for united discussions on the future of the renewal. Sid Purse of Chard was initially keen, but later recognised the meetings as an attempt to "organise" unity, and he withdrew his support. Wally North never came, and others declined to be involved after they saw what was going on. However, a group later known as the "London Brothers" formed from these meetings, the first one of which was held in the Leprosy Mission Hall in North London in 1970.

These London meetings became a popular venue for budding Restorationists. John Noble played a major part. He, with Gerald Coates, Terry Virgo, George Tarleton, Maurice Smith, and David Mansell formed the core of the leadership. In time the meetings transferred to the London School of Economics and the numbers swelled to over five hundred.

A restoration magazine appeared in 1971. It was called "Fulness" and its editors were Maurice Smith, Ted Crick and Graham Perrins, all three of whom held to sonship doctrines. David Lillie was a guest writer, and the topics were apostleship, unity, non-denominationalism, the restoration of the New Testament pattern, and the overcomers who would take the Church to glory. Discipleship was not yet an issue.

The Bradford Harvestime Fellowships

Meanwhile, Bryn Jones in Bradford was organizing the Northern wing of Restoration. His style from the beginning was different to the London Brothers, his fellowships were more classically Pentecostal, and governed by a more authoritarian style of leadership. Jones organised, from 1970 onwards, camp meetings that became the famous Dales Bible Week at the Great Yorkshire Showground near Harrogate. The Northern branch of Restoration was to become the dominant force for some years, and its magazine "Restoration", started in 1975, became the organ for the whole Movement.

However, in 1971 a watershed event took place that was to unite all camps of the budding Restoration Movement, and helped it to adopt officially its neo-latter rain doctrine. Arthur Wallis, fired by his endtimes vision which was becoming ever more radical, called a national leaders' meeting in 1971 to discuss eschatology. He wanted to do away with the "doom-and-gloom" theology of pre-millennialism. He believed what was needed was a united leadership to oversee the coming of the kingdom, and the restoration of the glorious endtime church.

What began as a meeting to discuss theology, turned into a workshop for the establishment of the Restoration Network. During the meetings the leaders received new

revelation that God wanted them to be the apostles and prophets of the new order. They were to be the inner court where the rules and laws of God's kingdom would be revealed through prophecy, and be transmitted to the flock by the authority of anointed leadership. They were God's Government on earth.

The "Magnificent Seven"

Originally seven leaders formed into partnership based on this ideal. They were Arthur Wallis, Peter Lyne, Bryn Jones, David Mansell, Graham Perrins and Hugh Thompson. This "magnificent seven" met a number of times, and received personal prophecies telling them what their functions in the Church were to be. Some were appointed as apostles, some as prophets and some as evangelists and teachers.

Before long, they widened the group to include seven more leaders – George Tarleton, Gerald Coates, Barney Coombs, Maurice Smith, Ian McCulloch, John MacLaughlan and Campbell McAlpine. The "fabulous fourteen" as they were known, believing they were to be the foundation of the New Church, came to the conclusion that they must covenant to one another and become submitted to the authority of one another as elders. In the same way that the Fort Lauderdale Five had developed "covering" in the 1970's, so did the fourteen leaders of the British Restoration church.

This was the real beginning of the radical change of direction for the charismatic church in Britain. The "fourteen" spent the years between 72 and 74 developing their ideas of apostolic leadership, and the rulership of the restored Church. **It is significant that American leaders like Orvil Swindoll and Ern Baxter had a hand in this development.** Argentinian Juan Carlos Ortiz was also influential in the development of "discipling" techniques, and his followers had already visited the Leprosy Hall meetings in the late 1960's.

Bryn Jones and Ern Baxter, of course, had already met and had mutual contacts in the States. Baxter was invited to speak, along with Bryn Jones, at the Capel Bible Week in 1974, and later went on to achieve an almost godlike status amongst the Restoration fellowships. He could do no wrong. Sadly, his doctrine was way off base and he carried the infection of his Latter Rain beliefs to Britain. Ern Baxter had travelled with William Branham (a story in itself) and also had George Warnock (author of the LR handbook, "The Feast of Tabernacles") as his Secretary on the eve of the Latter Rain revival.

Ern Baxter's teaching was, like that of Arthur Wallis, derisive of pre-millennialism, and contained the concepts of the Pattern Son and the Corporate Christ as well as the role of the Church in bringing in the Kingdom. (11) Baxter had, by the mid-70's, become part of the influential Fort Lauderdale Five, and so we now come to another radical change of direction – the adoption of shepherding to govern the New Order.

Shepherding Arrives!

There had been a window of opportunity in the early 70's, especially after the conspicuous failure of Anglicanism to pastor the spiritual revival that God was sending, for a genuine new move of the Holy Spirit to awaken the Church to her gifts and her responsibilities. Though many did benefit from what God accomplished at that time, the verdict of history is that (as so often before) fears, false teachings and the basic desires of the flesh prevailed over the Holy Spirit's leading so that the fire was quenched.

It seems to be the pattern that after the first uncoordinated attempts to seek and sustain renewal in the Church, bureaucracy, authority and officialdom step in to “organise” things on God’s behalf. On the one hand we have the spectacle of church leadership eager to maintain its power and authority among the people; on the other hand we have the Christians in the pews fearful of launching out into uncharted waters, seeking to be led, and lazy enough to settle into an ecclesiastical routine rather than follow the Holy Spirit without being able to predict “whence it cometh and whither it goeth” (John 3:8).

So the concept of “shepherding” when it sailed over the Pond, courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Five, caught on quicker than it should have done, and quickly changed the whole direction of charismatic renewal.

“Shepherding”, also known as “covering” or “discipleship” was born I believe out of fear – the fear of falling into theological error. (Also, the Five had begun working with Roman Catholic “charismatic” leaders, and this was surely a contributing factor. The concepts of “shepherding” and Priesthood are almost identical.)

At the time that the covering controversy erupted, there were increasing numbers of Christians coming out of churches unsympathetic to the charismatic experience, and it was thought that they needed to submit to an organised leadership if they were to avoid error and sin. (Actually, if a believer is listening to God, and willing to be corrected, there should be no fear in his Christian walk. His spiritual discernment will guide him. One wonders just how much spiritual discernment was operative in Fort Lauderdale at the time.)

Be that as it may, the fact is that the five men of the Christian Growth Ministries at Fort Lauderdale (Don Basham, Charles Simpson, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, and Ern Baxter) developed the theory that if they submitted to each other’s covering they would be protected from error. Through mutual submission and delegated authority, the possibility of teaching or acting contrary to God’s will could be avoided.

Soon, Christians were being taught that, in addition to conversion “discipleship” was mandatory, and unless Christians were “under their covering” they were out of God’s will and, in spiritual and practical terms, excommunicated from fellowship. This went far beyond the biblical teaching on the subject.

Pyramid structures of leadership were set up in many new fellowships, requiring the sheep to submit in all things and at all times to those above them, who were their designated “covering”. Inevitably this led to many abuses. Stories hit the press of Christians being commanded by their shepherds to move house, change their careers or get married, and some dictated even the smallest details of the lives of their flocks.

Surprisingly, the system of shepherding could be shaken neither by theological arguments nor scandalous stories of abuses. It took hold and spread, bringing thousands of Christians under the control of a handful of leaders who were designated Apostles of the Church. Those who had been enjoying freedom of worship and the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assembly were suddenly unable to open their mouths without permission from their Shepherds. Satan's counterattack to rein in the renewal was underway.

I believe that, whereas the teachings of restoration dictated the goal of the new churches, the practise of “shepherding” provided the means to fulfil it. Up to the mid 70's, Christians

seeking a charismatic fellowship felt free to join an independent local group, to meet in homes, to attend the occasional larger conference without any obligation to the organisers, and to remain unaffiliated - merely a member of the wider Body but not an organisational part of it. They had no real ties to the Restoration leadership beyond the usual respect or admiration.

However, discipling broke into this happy state of affairs with threats of excommunication and worse for anyone who failed to submit to the newly ordained leadership, the apostles and prophets of the New Order. It was no longer enough to be saved and attending your local fellowship. If you had no links, through the ranks of the pyramid structure, to your local Apostle you were "out of fellowship" with the Church as a whole and would miss out on the great endtime revival.

As Arthur Wallis states in his book, *"God... is ever halting and reversing the trend of the times by means of revival - or judgement. Where His people are not prepared for the one, they shut themselves up to the other"* (12)

Fear of disobeying God, and the threat of losing fellowship, made many charismatics submit whether they felt it was right or not. They became a captive audience for the new doctrines, unable to raise objections, for the leaders were closer to God than they and had received direct revelation of the truth. Furthermore, "rebellion" against the ordained leadership was "as witchcraft" and ranked as the highest crime against the Government of God.

Few were the believers who dared to stand out against the might and power of Restoration. One by one, small groups were swallowed up. Budding independent groups were visited by the local Restoration elders and persuaded, coerced, or duped into joining up with the Big System. Even Chard fellowship, after a long battle, succumbed to Restoration doctrine in time.

Conclusion

Although it is not possible to cover the subsequent history of the Restoration leadership in detail, it is characterised (despite its claims to near-divine status) by bitter doctrinal disputes, personality clashes, splits, rivalry, and scandals involving several members of the top leadership. Today the Restoration Movement has many different "tribes" each with its different doctrinal emphasis, but all broadly in agreement about the core issues.

Gerald Coates of "Pioneer" and Terry Virgo of "New Frontiers" are front runners, followed by "Ichthus" (Roger Forster) and various other similar groups. There is still a North/South divide, with significant differences of belief and practise. The former stronghold of Bryn Jones in Bradford, however, faltered and the magazine "Restoration" died (in all real terms) after a much-criticised article supporting Palestine claims to Israel and preaching replacement theology. (They are now known as Covenant Ministries.)

What began with a group of seven charismatic leaders has become an unstoppable juggernaut flattening everything in its path, mowing down the opposition and pulling Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and other denominational churches into the momentum of its journey. Branching out from their former isolation and tight doctrines, they have become ecumenistic, almost liberal, and are networking with every church group imaginable. The restoration

fellowships, together with Elim Pentecostal fellowships, were in the forefront of the Toronto, Promise Keepers and Pensacola controversies, just as they had promoted the Kansas City Prophets earlier on.

Restoration teachings are responsible for infecting almost every branch of British church life, and their goal of full visible unity seems to draw nearer every year, as successive churches succumb to their influence. This is a success story in the making, and if we were able to look back from fifty years in the future we would pinpoint the restoration fellowships and their doctrines as having swept almost every other form of Christianity off the board in the UK. No doubt the leaders see this as fulfilment of prophecy, vindicating their vision of fullness and glory. Sadly, the only fulfilment of prophecy that those outside the Big System can identify is that of apostasy and persecution - and the ultimate wholesale deception of the Church, leading her into the arms of Antichrist.

Nevertheless, there remains, as always, a believing Remnant, once more a hidden and despised few existing both within and without the conventional churches, yearning for a fuller expression of faith than that permitted by the System. We have come full circle back to the hopeful days at the dawn of renewal. Can we avoid treading the well-worn path back into religious bondage this time?

Once more true believers are praying for release from the System, and the freedom to worship simply as the Body of Christ, to exercise under God the gifts of the Spirit without officialdom breathing down their necks, and to reject false teaching without being pilloried for it. Perhaps this time we have learnt the lessons of history. Perhaps this time we will resist the pressures to conform to authoritarian structures, avoid being squelched by arrogant self-appointed shepherds, and strike out into the Holy Spirit's unknown territory where His will is all. Perhaps - I pray! But who knows?

ENDNOTES

- (1) "bread and circuses" [trans of Latin "panis et circenses", the only concerns of the Roman populace, according to Roman satiric poet Juvenal 140AD)] it means: entertainment provided at public expense; also a palliative offered to avert potential discontent
- (2) Lillie, "Beyond Charisma" Paternoster Press 1981, (Dedicated to G. H. Lang) P.123
- (3) Ibid., P.108 (4) Ibid, P. 114 (5) Ibid., P. 120
- (6) "Is Restoration Still On God's Programme?" David Lillie page 86 Kyrtonia ExPress, Devon, 1994
- (7) "Renewal" issue 52, page 16. In this issue there are two articles on the future of the charismatic movement, one by David Watson urging a policy of patience and staying within the historical churches, and the other by Wallis arguing for the opposite.
- (8) In later years, David Lillie also broke company with the mainline charismatic Restoration groups, they having failed to achieve the vision for restoration as he understood it. Lillie does not today approve of the Toronto "renewal" nor the spiritual abuses that stemmed from "shepherding". He remains committed to a purified New Man Church that he believes will still emerge from the rubble of the present "renewal". He has latterly been relating to Clifford Hill of "Prophecy Today" (PWM Ministries) who is setting up a "Reformed Charismatic Network" in Britain.

(9) Wallis, "In The Day of Thy Power" CLC 1956, Page 41 (10) Ibid., p.215
(II) See "Can The Elect Be Deceived" MacPherson quoting from Ern Baxter at the National Men's Shepherds Conference, Kansas City, Sept 1975.
(12) "In The Day Of Thy Power", p.216
(For more information regarding Tricia Tillin and *Banner Ministries*, see her web site at <http://www.fardistant.demon.co.uk>)