

# A Summary of Occult Inroads into the Charismatic Movement

There are various books describing the corruption of the Charismatic Movement; indeed I have written more than one myself. There are also books comprehensively detailing the incursions of occult thinking and practice into the modern churches. The most thorough of these is by my friend, Alan Morrison, *The Serpent & The Cross*, which particularly details the incursions of new Gnosticism and New Age occultism. However, what I want to do here is simply outline the key occult teachings and practice that have emerged in recent decades, mostly from Latter Rain and Pentecostal theology, as briefly as possible. It is important for Christ's disciples to understand the roots of these matters and thus be able to identify rogue incursions when they see them first hand. A simple guide would be of use.

## A DEFINITION

First we need to explain what we mean by 'occult'. The word literally means 'hidden' or 'secret', something beyond the world of experience, and refers to supernatural (i.e. hidden) power to do certain things. These fall into three categories, each with a host of subsets.

1. **Spiritualism:** ['spiritism' in the US] communing with spirits. This falls into two main branches: a) conversing with supposedly dead human beings, as in seances and the use of a medium. b) Channelling, or communicating directly with the spirit world in order to receive guidance or knowledge ('spirit guide' in New Age). While occultists believe that they are in contact with departed spirits or angels, in fact the Bible makes clear that it is evil spirits, fallen angels or demons that are speaking to them.
2. **Divination:** or fortune telling. This is the attempt to foretell the future by innumerable methods.
3. **Magic:** This is the attempt gain power to control nature through casting spells (incantations) or rituals. It must be distinguished from magic as entertaining conjuring (magic tricks), or sleight of hand (prestidigitation); though some occultists (especially Hindu gurus) use sleight of hand to fool disciples.

Charismatic practises involve all of these occult forms, but particularly the first two.

## COMMUNING WITH THE DEAD (NECROMANCY)

**Description:** Having fellowship with dead saints, either by direct impressions, visions or by hearing their voices from heaven.

**Claimed scriptural support:** There is none at all. Indeed it is utterly condemned. The case of King Saul speaking with a resurrected 'Samuel' via witchcraft is gross sin (Lev 20:27; Deut 18:10-11;) and one of the reasons why God condemned and removed him (1 Chron 10:13). The spirit of Samuel was merely a demonic counterfeit of the real Samuel who was in Paradise at the time and could not communicate with men (Lk 16:2off.). After death is judgment, with no opportunities to contact the material world until the General Resurrection at the end (Heb 9:27).

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There is none. Only outright heretics committed such sin.

**Origins:** This has been evidenced in recent years amongst radical Charismatics, particularly Word Faith evangelists and modern prophets. Even Classical Pentecostals have condemned this practice.<sup>1</sup> Examples of this aberrant behaviour include:

- Benny Hinn's visits to Kathryn Kuhlman's grave. Hinn says, '*I heard Kathryn's voice and suddenly there she was ... she said "Ask! We're waiting for you to ask! We're praying with you to ask." ... A week later the anointing hit my life.*'<sup>2</sup>
- Rick Joyner claims to regularly see William Branham in heaven.<sup>3</sup>
- Rick Joyner converses with the apostle Paul. In his book *The Final Quest* he relates visions of meetings with the apostle Paul, who then states that he has been waiting to meet Joyner; note the incredible arrogance of Joyner in considering that Paul looked up to him! What is more, he states that Paul fell short in his apostolic calling and work.<sup>4</sup> This contradicts the real Paul who said, '*I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*' (2 Tim 4:7-8).
- Morton Kelsey communed with the dead.<sup>5</sup>

**Occult sources:** Communing with the supposed dead, in reality evil spirits, is a chief feature of the occult and has been for thousands of years. This is called 'necromancy, the purpose being to gain information about the future and thus it is a constituent of spiritualism and divination. Modern spiritualism came to the fore in the mid-1800s when curiosity about the paranormal was roused. Controversial experiences of spirit communication occurred in America with the experiences of Kate (1841-1892) and Margareta Fox (1838-1893), and particularly Andrew Jackson's claims to be a medium in 1843. From these the Victorian fascination with seances and spiritualism grew rapidly, even ensnaring Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Famous mediums included Douglas Home, who was said to have levitated, and Eusapia Palladino, a young peasant girl who used telekinesis. Various spiritualist churches were established as a result of all this excitement. It was in this time of fervent expectation of the paranormal that many new Christian sects arose claiming divine power (Holiness Mvt. denominations, Mormons, JWs etc) and that early Charismatic experiences appeared (e.g. Irvingites, Mormons, Holiness Mvt., Early Pentecostalism).

Harry Houdini, though personally anxious to establish genuine spirit communication, set about disproving the antics of many mediums who preyed upon the gullible. His friendship with Conan Doyle was severed when Lady Conan Doyle produced a message from Houdini's dead mother by automatic writing (writing under the control of a spirit) which had a greater command of English than his mother possessed. Mediums fall into two sections: frauds out to exploit people and genuine occultists in fellowship with demons. A Biblical example of the latter is seen in Acts 16:16.

**Conclusion:** God's word absolutely condemns such behaviour. No one who condones such gross sin can possibly be a true believer.

## BEING SLAIN IN THE SPIRIT

<sup>1</sup> Classic Pentecostal preacher Joseph Chambers stated that it was '*absolutely the biggest pack of "ultimate lies" from demons and devils that I have ever reviewed ... Rick Joyner is an ultimate false prophet*'. [Paw Creek Ministries, Review article from website.]

<sup>2</sup> Sermon preached at Blaisdale Arena, Honolulu, 28.2.97 quoted in R Liichow, *The Two Roots of Today's Revival*, p193.

<sup>3</sup> In *The Final Quest* Joyner relates a vision of seeing a man whom he considered had 'gone off the rails' in his teaching yet is sitting on a great throne in the highest part of heaven's throne room. All commentators believe this to be William Branham; Joyner does not name him specifically, however, the description makes this obvious.

<sup>4</sup> Rick Joyner, *The Final Quest*, Morning Star Publications, 1996, pp. 131-132

<sup>5</sup> Morton Kelsey, *Christo*, p39, 148-149; *Afterlife: The Other Side of Dying*.

**Description:** This is when a person falls to the floor backwards, usually today into the arms of a ‘catcher’ but sometimes into chairs, resulting in physical damage. The initial cause of this is a leader laying hands on, or even hitting, a person’s forehead. The background cause is the passivity and suggestibility of the victim, resulting from letting his mind go during a long emotional worship time that involves repetitive singing and loud music. In extreme cases, where the leader is deeply versed in occult techniques, people fall to the floor in droves upon the leader waving his hand or blowing on them from some distance away. In very extreme cases a person may be thrown against a wall by the motion of a leader many yards away.

**Claimed scriptural support:** There is none. Occasions when a person fell in the presence of God or his angel were very different. The person usually fell forwards and fell into a submissive, fearful and worshipful posture in the presence of the almighty. They did not fall backward lying unconscious for long periods; indeed usually God raises the person to his feet and speaks to him. E.g: Rev 1:17; Ezek 1:28; Dan 8:18.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There is none. Claims that the theologian Jonathan Edwards supported this are false, and are the result of violently twisting certain of his writings. Some revivals, such as the Irish 1859 revival, did have physical excesses but these were condemned by many at the time as false.

**Origins:** This became prominent with the growth of the Pentecostal Movement. In the early days of this it was normal to have a supply of blankets on hand in order to cover the nakedness of women who had fallen and exposed themselves. Precursors of such falling have been evidenced in secular mass hysteria (e.g. St Vitus Dance) and in supposed revivals where extreme emotionalism and odd phenomena were allowed to occur (when sober men controlled meetings they did not arise). The most famous of these were the Cane Ridge Revival (1801) in the American west, and those which followed, where all the excesses later seen in the Toronto experience were manifested. These often led to wanton sinful behaviour; a contemporary saying was that ‘as many were begot as born again’. Falling over in a trance had been manifest in many heretical groups through history, sometimes happening on a wide scale, such as Holiness meetings led by Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924), the early Mormons (1830 ff.), the Shakers (1770 ff.), the New Light Prophets (1742 ff.), or the French Prophets (1688 ff.). But the occurrence goes back much further through the various ‘enthusiast’ groups, millennial extremists in the post-Reformation period, the Medieval Mystics and early church extremists such as the Montanists. The difference today is that what was always considered to be extreme, fanatical and aberrant in history (right up to the 1960s), is now widely considered to be normal as a result of the Charismatic Movement.

**Occult sources:** Falling over in a trance, usually backwards, has long been evidenced in all sorts of occult groups. Almost any shamanistic type of ritual will involve such trance inducement (e.g. by repetitive drumming, drugs, dancing etc.) and falling backwards unconscious. Examples of this can be seen going back to ancient orgiastic fertility rites and demon worship. Modern Hindu cults that have invaded susceptible western seekers in the last 50 years frequently have individuals fall backwards in a trance upon being touched by a master. As a result of this touch people are demonised and become suppliant, willing disciples of this master. The most famous of these masters in the 1970s was Guru Maharaj Ji of the then Divine Light Mission (now Elan Vital). It is also noteworthy that stage hypnotists can exactly mimic the effects of Charismatic and occult leaders in getting people to fall unconscious backwards. The difference is that these entertainers debrief the victims afterwards to get rid of any bad effects of being hypnotised. Religious leaders do not, thus many people are psychologically damaged by the experience.

**Conclusion:** There is no scriptural support for this, therefore it should be condemned out of hand. Neither is there any valid historical support, since it only occurred in heretical and aberrant groups. It clearly has a long occult history and has been very evident in the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards alongside the rapid growth of New Age ideas and Hindu cultic

advancements. The Pentecostal promotion of this happened alongside these modern occult developments. The practice is to be utterly condemned.

## EXTREME PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS

**Description:** Aberrant behaviour resulting: in barking, shouting, crowing, shrieking, screaming, laughing continuously, jumping, running on the spot, running around the room, baying, mimicking birth pains, repeatedly shouting something irrational (such as, 'I am a piece of toast'), marching in ranks round the room, dancing.

**Claimed scriptural support:** attempts to establish any Biblical support have all been discredited since such unreasonable behaviour is always condemned in scripture. Indeed, the Lord commands that only what is decent and in order can be accepted in church meetings (1 Cor 14:40).

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** Though there are heretical precursors, they are the sort that only uninformed people would want as an influence.

**Origins:** The most obvious recent explosion of this sort of behaviour was the Toronto Experience of the mid-1990s, but repeated since in smaller measures. Though this was derided by Classical Pentecostals, along with many evangelicals, such behaviour has been evidenced in Pentecostalism from the very beginning. It is a natural by-product of its teachings and practice, emerging clearly in the Azusa Street 'revival' (1906-1910). When Pentecostalism spread abroad, so did these aberrant manifestations. GH Lang's book, *The Tongues Movement* describes several of these in detail.

However, the religious sources of this are not modern but go back centuries. Crazy behaviour has attended many uncontrolled 'revival' meetings and were constituent parts of certain rogue groups (e.g. those mentioned earlier or in Edward Irving's church (mid-1800s). The Cane Ridge revival, and similar contemporary Methodist camp meetings, displayed all these features for years.

**Occult sources:** We could mention many historical cases of this, as it is a common feature of occult works. Whenever self-control is abandoned, extreme behaviour easily follows. However, the chief occult example of this today is kundalini yoga. 'Kundalini' means 'serpent power' and is the title for an ancient form of yoga regarding 'cosmic' energy which, supposedly, lies within everyone. It was developed in Kashmir and is associated with the bloodthirsty goddess Kali (Shakti). This energy is symbolised as a coiled serpent lying at the base of the spine. A master attempts to awaken the Kundalini, through a series of yogic techniques combining bodily movements, meditation and breathing exercises. The Kundalini rises through six centres, called *chakras* (energy centres that produce occult effects such as clairvoyance); arriving at the seventh at the top of the head. At this stage, the person experiences bliss which is supposed to represent the Hindu reintegration with God.

Kundalini of different chakras can only be released in a disciple by an adept whose kundalini is already awakened. Adepts do this through the laying on of hands upon willing and passive disciples. The physical manifestations (*kriyas*) which occur are taken to be the height of religious experience. These include: twitches and spasms, tingling feelings, involuntary bodily movements, jerks, shaking, fatigue, rapid breathing and heartbeat, numbness, involuntary crying or laughing (sometimes for days on end), hearing inner sounds (like water flowing, birds singing, ringing), mental confusion, altered states (trances), ecstasy, out of body experiences, twisting like a snake and hissing, roaring like a lion, barking like a dog, rapid neck movements, being slain in the spirit, or healing powers.

The release of Kundalini can create psychological changes, causing many to seek medical help. For this reason, many Hindu gurus do not awaken Kundalini and use different yogic techniques like meditation; gurus that do can be very powerful. There is widely attested evidence of miracles, healing, telepathy, producing material objects out of

thin air, throwing waves of the spirit into the audience etc.

The Toronto Movement showed all of these signs. The experience was dependent upon an adept transferring the 'power' through laying on of hands, requiring people to travel to Toronto or another centre. Congregations were willing participants and were made additionally passive by long worship times, and were made suggestible by commands (instead of teaching) on what to expect and what not to do (like, 'just receive and don't think'). The physical phenomena released comply with experiences in occult Kundalini practice for thousands of years, which are devoted to the worship of a most vile demon (Kali). Furthermore, the repercussions in mental breakdowns, depression, headaches etc. for those who intensely submitted to Toronto, is typical of Kundalini excesses. Extreme physical manifestations occur in all intense occult religions.

**Conclusion:** It is incredible that anyone calling themselves by the name of Christ could think for one minute that such behaviour is acceptable. Yet such is the power of false teaching that many sincere Christians have been so deluded. Irrational behaviour is to be condemned.

## ANGELIC PROMPTED HEALING OR HEALING BY WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE

**Description:** This is when a leader is inspired by a certain 'angel' that has appeared to him and then goes on to declare a 'word of knowledge', which is information received by prescience. On calling out this information, healing is then effected to people responding to the information. Some people use this supposed 'word of knowledge' without any specific angelic (demonic) prompting.

**Claimed scriptural support:** There are various examples in scripture where God gives a prophet secret information or knowledge about a person he could not know naturally (Dan 2:29; Ezek 38:10). Jesus even discerned the thoughts that people were thinking before they uttered them (Matt 9:4, 12:25). This is all part of the expected ministry of a true prophet who hears from God (Ps 44:21; 139:2), not an angel. This is never called a 'word of knowledge', neither is it ever given in order to aid a healing ministry. Apostles healed immediately and fully upon God's direction (e.g. Acts 3:6-8).

Angelic ministry was to serve saints under the Old Covenant. They are God's ministers (Heb 1:7) and often encouraged, safeguarded or directed saints before the cross (e.g. Gen 19:1ff). After the cross they protect the elect until they come to the point of conversion (Heb 1:14). After conversion angelic ministry is not required by believers since they have God himself in their hearts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to guide them (Jn 16:13). Their protection is under God's hand; indeed all that happens to them is predestined to serve God's purpose (Eph 2:10).

Regarding 1 Cor 12:8, 'to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit', the emphasis of the Greek is upon 'word' and means the capacity to express knowledge and wisdom through speech. Paul states that he did this in Corinth in 2 Cor 11:6, 'Even though *I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am* not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.' This is explained by his words in 1 Cor 2:13, 'These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' Paul's teaching was the result of divine training; the knowledge he expressed in words was gifted revelation by the Spirit. He explains the history of this in Gal 1:12, 'For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Every believer is trained and led by the Spirit into truth, but teachers are given by God to the church to equip the saints (Eph 4:11) and are granted a special measure of revelation in order to impart spiritual knowledge. Teaching is the expression of the revelation which the Spirit has given a teacher; it is not the product of research or seminary training (though these are helpful in providing background knowledge). There is no basis here for the Charismatic practice of public revelation of hidden things which uses this name. The 'word

of knowledge' means spiritual teaching; the 'word of wisdom' is divine knowledge practically applied to the human condition. Both are expressed by the teachers and pastors God gives to the church; indeed the body cannot function without this ministry, which is why these are mentioned in 1 Cor 12, a chapter on the functioning of the body through various ministries and gifts.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There is no genuine historical precursor in the way it is modelled by Pentecostals and Charismatics.

**Origins:** There have been a few isolated moments in church history when supposed healings of this sort arose, but the most prominent origin is in Pentecostalism and particularly in the ministry of William Branham (1909-1965) in the 40s and 50s. He had been directed by voices in his head from an early age and in 1946 was told by one that he would be a great healer. He had a chief voice, which he called his angel, to whom he was in complete bondage and fear all his life. While this would be considered delusional, psychotic or even demonic today, Branham was able to start a church of people who believed him to be led by God, despite the content and effects of these messages proving that it was false. Even his later heretical teaching did not prevent famous Pentecostal leaders supporting him, such as Oral Roberts, A. A. Allen, George Warnock, Demos Shakarian, and latterly, Paul Cain. For a while Ern Baxter was his secretary, travelling with him, until Branham's aberrant teaching and corruption forced Baxter to quit. The depth of his heresies include:

- A modalist, not Trinitarian, view of God.
- Rebaptism in the name of Jesus only.
- The Zodiac and the Pyramids were equal to the Bible as the word of God.
- Satan seduced Eve in Eden producing Cain, the 'Serpent's seed' (despite Gen 4:1).
- A hatred of women, whom he blamed for evil ('not worth a good clean bullet!').
- The denial of eternal punishment.
- The claim the world would end in 1977.

Branham went so far as to proclaim his followers as the 'seed of God' and promote himself as the angel of Revelation 3:14 and 10:7. Eventually he committed the absolute blasphemy of baptising people in his own name! There is also a photograph of Branham with an occult light manifesting above his head. He was so popular with certain Pentecostals that he was thought to be God and even born of a virgin!!! Many claimed that he was a great prophet, including Kenneth Hagin and many modern Charismatics. Branham's teaching on the power of the spoken word influenced Word of Faith theology.

His method of healing was completely adapted into mainstream Charismatic practice. This was to receive a message ('word of knowledge') from his spirit guide concerning information about an ailment he could not previously know, and then claim that the person(s) coming forward with that ailment would be healed. He once declared that the power to heal did not arise from the Holy Spirit but only from his 'angel'. On one occasion Branham met an occultist, not knowing this, he declared that he looked exactly like his 'angel'.<sup>6</sup> When Paul Cain 'heals' by words of knowledge or Todd Bentley is led by an 'angel' called Emma, they are following in the footsteps of William Branham, whom they publicly revere. However, Branham was not as successful as he claimed. Close aides later condemned him for exaggerating his healing results and psychologically manipulating audiences to see things that were not there.<sup>7</sup> Like modern Charismatics he blamed failed healings on a lack of faith in the sufferer; while many people died after he declared them healed.<sup>8</sup> Not one genuine healing was found to have taken place during Canadian meetings held in Saskatoon, in 1947; one of the few subjected to any scrutiny. One prominent leader,

<sup>6</sup> Kurt Koch, *Occult Bondage and Deliverance*, Kregel, (1971), p48-50.

<sup>7</sup> *Branham, Prophet or Profiteer*, Alfred Pohl and David Cloud, Way of Life Literature, Oak Harbour, Washington (1991), p16. See also, Pohl, *17 Reasons Why I Left the Tongues Mvt.*, p79+.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p17.

who had declared that his wife was healed on his radio show, was forced to reveal that she died ten days later. He was even publicly accused of witchcraft by co-workers.<sup>9</sup> All these aberrations were repeated in later Charismatic healing ministries.

**Occult sources:** This ministry is today called channelling by occultists; it used to be called clairvoyance and was usually performed by a medium. Spiritualism is slightly different in that the demonic spirit communicating a message pretends to be a dead person. Clairvoyance refers to the effect while spiritualism refers to the means. Thus clairvoyance is the ability to see or perceive things beyond physical reality by entering the spiritual or supernatural realm. Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) was a famous occult exponent of this. Like his near contemporary Branham he began doing this at an early age; he too had a divine visitation aged 7 and began as a Christian teacher and faith healer. Also like Branham he introduced occult teachings into his ministry, such as reincarnation, God is female and male and not omniscient etc. Channelling focuses on engaging with a spirit being in order to gain information, and in this form it is very common in various aspects of New Age cults. As New Age groups developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so this form of channelling ministry developed in parallel in Pentecostal churches under the name of the 'word of knowledge' and angelic guidance.

**Conclusion:** This behaviour has no Biblical support of any kind, but it has been common occult religions and sects for thousands of years. It is aberrant and heretical.

## MYSTICISM

**Description:** There are many definitions and many expressions of mysticism, which has been widespread amongst people from the earliest times. The simplest explanation is that mysticism is the gradual ascent to a subjective experience of union with God, through diverse techniques which all endeavour to awake and encourage the divine spark within every man. Charismatics would recoil from such obvious error, plainly stated, but fail to see that many of their customs are essentially mystical in their origin and their practice. Today we have seen the rebirth of ancient Gnosticism appearing in various Charismatic churches. It would take too long to list all of these but we can highlight some generalities.

- Preaching and authoritarian leadership which demands unquestioning loyalty (e.g. 'drink and don't think').
- Long, sustained, repetitive singing accompanied by emotional instrumental music.
- Hypnotic softening up of audiences by leaders and the structure of meetings.
- Teachings that emphasise self-surrender ('let go and let God'), submission or self-abasement.
- Teachings that encourage excessive contemplation & meditation.
- Encouragement of emotionalism and discouragement of intellectualism and volition.
- Discouragement of theology and Biblical examination.
- The use of mind-control techniques (hypnotism).
- The use of psychotherapy techniques.
- Emphasis upon subjective experiences which are accepted without any Biblical testing.
- Preaching that Christians are not like God but are God. This is common in Word Faith circles.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p26.

<sup>10</sup> 'You don't have a god in you. You are one' ... 'You are all little gods'. Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Love*, tape BCC-56, Fort Worth, Texas. Copeland, *Praise the Lord*, Trinity Broadcasting Network. Earl Paulk, Casey Treat, Morris Cerullo and Robert Tilton have made similar comments. Note Benny Hinn shocking comments: 'I'm Benny Jehovah'. [Spiritual Warfare Seminar, Jubilee Christian Centre 2.5.90. Quoted in *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, Fisher and Goedelman, Personal Freedom Outreach, St Louis, (1996) p12.]

Thus much in the Charismatic Movement is subjective and untested resulting in emotionalism instead of intellectual truth. Many who dislike wrong doctrine in their Charismatic church continue to attend because they are literally addicted to the emotionalism of the 'worship' time. This has become a mystical experience whereby folk feel that they are lost in God. The subjective emotional experience causes the release of endorphins that create pleasant feelings and is the chief reason why people go to such churches. The Toronto Experience was an explosion of mysticism, along with other occult manifestations tagged on.

**Claimed scriptural support:** There is none at all. What happens is that mystical ideas are introduced to the church along with certain scriptures tacked on to dress them up in a superficial Biblical manner. Usually the texts are completely out-of-context and do nothing to establish the veracity of the teaching. The Bible always affirms the responsibility of the individual and the need for self-control; indeed godly self-control is a spiritual fruit of relationship with Christ.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There have been many mystical elements in the general Christian church, but most of these have either been professing Christians or seriously deluded apostate believers. Sound churches have always condemned all forms of mysticism. Charismatics don't tend to lean on these for support, even though they form part of their development.

**Origins:** There have always been rogue elements practising mysticism, even in the time of the apostles (Col 2:8; 1 Tim 6:20-21). One of the first main problems to affect the church was religious Gnosticism, a multi-faceted syncretism of oriental mysticism, philosophy and Christianity that damaged churches for centuries. This was based upon special knowledge (*Gnosis*) being mediated by adepts to disciples. The emphasis was upon revealed mystery, ritual and ascent to divinity through the help of angels. Rituals included: hymns, repetitive chanting, drugs, meditation, ecstatic experiences and so on. Many aspects were similar to practices now found in New Age groups. Full enlightenment was by a continual ascent up a never-ending path, requiring constant new experiences of revelation. Many developments in modern Charismatic churches are a resurgence of Gnostic ideas, especially the constant need for new experiences of the 'divine' instead of growing in grace through understanding God's word, faith and walking in the Spirit.

The recent developments in the Charismatic Movement arise from immediate Pentecostal precursors. A line of development can be traced to this going back through the Holiness Movement, the Shakers, Methodism, Quakerism, Quietism, Reformation 'enthusiasts' (i.e. fanatical Charismatic mystics like the Schwenkfelders), Medieval mysticism and so forth. A strong mystical movement arose in the 4<sup>th</sup> century under the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite, continuing for many years and influencing later times. Before this some teachers influenced by Platonism fell into mysticism, such as Origen. Other professing Christians who developed mystical ideas include William Law (1686-1761). Typical of mystical ideas generally, Law held to universalism, i.e. that all men have a spark or seed of divine life in them in the centre of their souls which needs to be drawn out by degrees to regain the life that Adam lost at the Fall. Typical of Law, his most famous work, *A serious call to a devout and holy life* (1728), has little to say about Christ's atonement or his Gospel; yet it influenced many, including the Wesleys, thus prompting the mystical ideas inherent in Methodism.

**Occult sources:** Throughout history there have been many disciplines taught in order to achieve union with or absorption into God. Many of these have propounded forms of intense contemplation; others demanded special revelation of hidden knowledge or communion with supernatural spirit beings; some affirmed the need for special disciplines,

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*'You are a little god on earth running around ... I am a little Messiah walking on earth..'* [Trinity Broadcast Network's (TBN) *Praise The Lord Show*, 6.12.90.]

such as asceticism, fasting, transcendental meditation, celibacy, yoga or pain; while some used drugs. What they all have in common is inducing a feeling of touching God as a result of repressing the intellect and will. All demand self-surrender, which is usually described as a death experience, and self-abasement. Most world religions have offshoots that are mystical expressions of the system's basic teaching, including Christianity. Sometimes this mysticism is outlawed; sometimes encouraged. Thus Sufism is mystical Islam while the Medieval Mystics were the mystical expression of Christianity in the Middle Ages. Some schools of philosophy are but a systematised form of mysticism, such as Neoplatonism.

The demand for self-surrender lies at the root of all occultism and this is always associated with techniques to engender passivity. Self-control and sound thinking are the enemies of occultism because they prevent passivity developing. When a person's mind is passive, and self-control has evaporated, then they become suggestible and open to hypnotic command. A willing, suggestible person can be made to believe almost anything, and even induced to perform behaviour that would be scandalous to their normal mind. Thus people in a passive state or trance will believe that they have spoken to God or even that they are God. In extreme cases people are empowered to do physical things that are impossible in their normal waking condition, such as walk on hot coals, or push skewers through skin; some would become rigid and during this state they could be hit with sledgehammers or be used to hammer nails into wood. A woman of the Convulsionaires bent backwards over the sharp point of a peg and a fifty pound stone was dropped from a great height on to her over and over again. Just the falling stone would have usually crushed a person, but she left without a mark on her!

The explanations of the powerful effects of mystical techniques are that the person becomes open to exploitation by evil spirits where the passivity of the mind has allowed demonic control of the personality and body. The effects of this control varies with the spiritual dominion involved; for instance some mystics will gain hidden knowledge passed on through demonic networks (clairvoyance); some will become rigorous in holy behaviour while others will be dissolute. Some will be withdrawn while others are vociferous. There are many records of individuals that were able to levitate, even with people pulling at their feet.

With so many expressions of occult mysticism it is necessary to pull out the key features. These are: the goal of passivity (emptying of the mind); eradication of questioning; self-surrender (losing oneself) and openness to suggestibility by spiritual forces. Different schools of the occult use differing techniques to achieve these ends.

**Conclusion:** All forms of mysticism are to be condemned; it has no place in Christianity. Sound Biblical teaching has always affirmed the importance of the mind and self-control. Righteousness is right action resulting from revealed truth, rather than inaction resulting from contemplation or a mystical subjective experience.

## **SPEAKING (& SINGING) IN TONGUES**

**Description:** Speaking in babbling sounds, or gibberish (i.e. in no known human language) to promote a spiritual experience. When interpreted, tongues are used as a supposed means of blessing the gathered church. In traditional Pentecostalism this interpretation was in prophetic form; in many modern Charismatic circles it is usually in prayer form.

**Claimed scriptural support:** There are several mentions of speaking in tongues in the NT (e.g. Acts 2, 10; 1 Cor 12-14). While we cannot discuss these at length (I have a long article available if required) it is certain that these Biblical examples are the speaking of a known, existing human language by someone who was not trained in that language. The interpretations were also neither prayers nor prophecies but declarations of God's glory and wonders. They were also chiefly meant as a sign of judgment upon Israel. The practice died out by 70 AD when the temple (and thus OT Judaism) was destroyed, which complies

with what Paul states in 1 Cor 13:8. The Greek of this verse makes clear that once tongues ceased on their own, (unlike knowledge which would cease at the end) they would not re-appear. All Christian denominations agree that tongues disappeared for nearly 2,000 years; thus any modern tongues cannot be genuine. There is no mention of tongues in the later letters of any apostle and most of the NT ignores them altogether.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** Charismatics agree that tongues vanished for most of church history. Some would point to certain groups that spoke in tongues before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but these were all from heretical and aberrant groups.

**Origins:** The prime precursors to the modern tongues movements were the scandalous Victorian Catholic Apostolic church in London and the teachings of the sad preacher Edward Irving who joined them, later to be rebuffed. This church fell into all the typical abuses of authoritarian Charismatic churches. There were also occasions of tongue speaking in the excitements of certain Holiness Movement meetings in America. Before that only outright heretics and fanatics had manifest tongues, such as: the Cevanols (French Prophets), the Jansenists, the Quakers, the Shakers, the Mormons and fanatics in several revivals.

**Occult sources:** Tongue speaking, especially when in a trance-like state, was known from ancient times in pagan religions. The report of Wenamon mentions a case from 1100 BC in Byblos on the Syrian coast; the speaker was a disciple of the god Amon. Plato (429-347 BC) mentions several cases. Virgil gives the example of the Sibylline priestess on Delos. Chysostom cites the Pythoness of Delphi. The ancient mystery religions manifest many examples of tongues, such as the cults of Mithras, Osiris and others. The list is endless. In the modern world tongues have been evidenced in many cults, Christian sects and occult religions. Iranian dervishes, certain Muslims, Eskimos, Tibetans, Chinese and many others have demonstrated tongues. Mormons, witches, Hindu sects and various New Age groups speak in tongues. We could go on.

Tongue-speaking is a trait of all false religions and occult groups, and has been for thousands of years. It is common when people let go of their mental faculties, and on becoming passive they speak under a spiritual (read 'demonic') compulsion. Some tongue-speaking by aboriginal shamans has been more spectacular than Charismatic versions, such as Zulu medicine men speaking the foreign languages of nations they had never heard of. Tongue-speaking also arises from certain mental disorders and exactly mimics the sounds heard in Charismatic churches.

**Conclusion:** The crucial problem for Charismatics is that their tongues are always gibberish, or not a language. Despite denials, every test of this by linguists have proved them to be babbling. This cannot be Biblical tongues since there is no miracle or gift involved; anyone can do this and in fact much of it in Charismatic circles is learned by example and the sounds of individuals are very similar (falling into key sound-groups). If there is no difference between the babbling of a person suffering brain damage and the speech of Charismatics, where is the miracle? Biblical tongues were human languages that gave a clear message – to glorify God. Modern tongues are not languages and who knows what the noises mean? To get round this Charismatics have invented the idea that their tongues are angelic speech, but this has not an ounce of Biblical support, and, in any case, whenever angels appeared to men they spoke the local human language. In heaven (as immaterial spiritual beings) Angels would need no vocal language. No angel ever came to earth and babbled. Tongue-speaking today is unbiblical and is of occult derivation.

## VISUALISATION

**Description:** This is claimed to be a technique to develop faith. It centres around the idea of having a clear goal or objective and imagining this as a distinct image in the mind. This image is then cultivated, developed in detail and grown to support faith until the wanted

item is received. Some have called this ‘imagineering’. The most famous example is that of a need for a bicycle. Instead of simply praying for one’s need, the pray-er imagined exactly what sort of cycle he wanted down to the smallest detail and incubated this in his mind, making it the focus of his prayers, until one day exactly this type of bike was given to him.

**Claimed scriptural support:** None, except as out-of-context verses sought to prop up the teaching.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** None.

**Origins:** In its modern Charismatic form it was developed chiefly by the teachings of Paul (now David) Yonggi Cho of Korea. Having the largest church in the world gave him a credibility far beyond his doctrinal ability, so that what should have been condemned out-of-hand as heresy was largely accepted and repeated in Charismatic churches worldwide.

**Occult sources:** Cho was clearly influenced in his teaching by the local variant of Buddhism, Soka Gakkai (Value Creation Society). What he teaches is exactly what is taught by this Japanese Buddhist sect [the lay organisation of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism founded in 1930, but based on the teaching of the 13<sup>th</sup> century teacher Nichiren, comprising of over 16 million people].

Visualisation is a term used by several disciplines (such as graphic design and computer modelling) but our concern here are with its connection to meditation. Creative visualisation is a tool used for improving confidence and gaining what you want. It is so effective that training on this form of mediation is sold by practitioners for large sums of money. It is connected to positive thinking and concerns training the subconscious to work in the way that you want it to by banishing negative thoughts. Combining visualisation with certain chakras (a mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism) is supposed to produce psychic ability. Essentially these techniques are just another way of opening up the soul to demonic invasion through passivity (normal bodily self-control is lost in the concentration on an image). All meditation techniques do this whether it be concentration upon a mystical Hindu/Buddhist sound (e.g. ‘Aum’), a complicated circular image (‘mandala’ – a Tibetan Buddhist ritual diagram or ‘yantra’ a similar Hindu revelatory symbolic diagram) or a personalised trigger phrase (transcendental meditation). In this case the concentration on a desired object will do the trick.

**Conclusion:** Biblical faith has nothing to do with imagining images; faith results from the word of God, ‘So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God’ (Rm 10:17). This is the truth of the Bible opened up and revealed to the soul by the Holy Spirit, who leads us into truth. The meditation technique of visualisation has no value in inspiring Biblical faith and must be condemned. Biblical faith is based upon truth, God’s word; visualisation is based upon occult meditation.

## PROPHECY USED AS DIVINATION

**Description:** This is commonly experienced as personal predictive prophecy.

**Claimed scriptural support:** The ministry of the Old Testament prophets. In the New Testament we only see the occasion when Agabus warned Paul of his future imprisonment in Acts 21:10ff. It should be noted that though this was a correct prediction, Paul ignored it, discerning that God wanted him to preach to Caesar’s household (Phil 4:22). Nero was emperor at that time but it is thought that that the empress Poppaea was a Christian; Josephus states that ‘she was a worshipper of the true God.’ Jerome adds (in Phm) that Paul had converted many in Caesar’s family, for he ‘turned the house of Christ’s persecutor into a church.’ This shows the great danger of following even a true prophecy; what is important is being led by the Spirit and obeying God. If the predictive prophecy is not of God then following this word will deceive and ruin you. Believers are responsible for their own life choice to God and to no one else. In the OT believers did not have the indwelling

Spirit of God and were not being led by God in the same way as New Covenant believers; thus prophetic ministry was required in order to keep bringing God's corrective word to them. We do not need the ministry of prophets now but must abide in Christ and follow him.

There is also the case of Timothy being encouraged by prophecy (1 Tim 1:18-19). However, this occurred when he was younger and in commenting on them Paul was more concerned with his apostolic instructions rather than affirming old prophecies. He tells Timothy to follow his instructions in order to fight the good fight of faith. There was no prophetic direction here. The prophecies had been, like Spurgeon's case, an encouragement that his life would be used by God given by those who loved him.

The ministry of prophets in the early church lasted while the canon of scripture was being developed; their chief job was to bring God's encouraging word to the people. The early church had no Bible and only a few people would have even had some scrolls of the OT; others may have had some scrolls of Jesus' teaching and copies of some apostolic letters. As the Gospels and letters were written some decades after the cross, then these copies would have spread but by 100 AD few people would have had all the NT, and even fewer all the Bible. Gradually copies increased and common assent of the 66 books of the Bible was accepted by all. By the mid-to-late 200s there was general agreement of the NT canon but it was not formally accepted until 397 in the council of Carthage. As the canon developed, so prophetic ministry faded away since it was no longer needed in this form. Note the teaching in Hebrews, developing Jeremiah's prophecy,

'For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' In that He says, 'A new *covenant*,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:10-13)

Under the New Covenant we have direct access to God and even have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). We do not need intermediaries to tell us exactly what to do with details of our personal lives. (This is not to be confounded with the genuine ministry of teaching, to expound Biblical doctrine; or pastoring, to apply that doctrine for the edification of a believer's personal walk.) Personal prophecies imply directives and imperatives, since they are supposedly from a knowing of God's will better than the receiver.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There is very little, if any, evidence of this in evangelical churches. There are a few examples, such as the prophecy regarding CH Spurgeon's future ministry, but these do not follow the same format or authoritative nature of Charismatic predictive prophecies, rather being generalised encouragement.

**Origins:** Again the chief precursor is in Latter Rain practices and amongst other radical Pentecostals. *The [Pentecostal] Apostolic Church* today formally appoints people to the prophetic office who are used to determine ministerial strategies. Predictive prophecy was a key feature of Latter Rain ministry, along with a number of features that mistakenly sought to lift Old Covenant ministry out of its dispensation and translate it into modern terms, ignoring New Covenant teaching and example. Note for instance that apostolic prophecy never uses the introduction of 'Thus says the Lord' and suchlike. The phrase, 'says the Lord' only appears in the NT in quotation of scripture, and one occasion in Revelation when Christ is speaking in heaven.

Before the Pentecostals there were a number of prophetic groups and individuals who practised predictive personal prophecy; but these were all heretical extremists, most of whom were disgraced or discredited. Such would include the Montanists (2<sup>nd</sup> century), the French Prophets (Camisards or Cevenols, 1686 ff; many who prophesied and spoke in tongues in this movement were children), the Zwickau Prophets (*Storchites*, 1520s) and the appalling millennial Anabaptist uprising in Munster (1530s). Many such enthusiast

groups and individuals ended up being scandalised, persecuted, and condemned by both Reformed and Roman churches. Later examples include the Shakers, Irvingites, certain Holiness teachers and Mormons.

The recent explosion of supposed prophetic ministry emerged with the Signs and Wonders Movement in the late 80s. There had always been prophecies in the Charismatic Movement, and even more in the Restoration Movement, itself an outgrowth of Latter Rain, but there was not a great deal of personal prophecy; indeed some discouraged it as dangerous. However when Paul Cain attached himself to John Wimber this changed and, indeed, it led to the promotion of the Kansas City Prophets (KCP), which even Wimber eventually distanced himself from, in 1992, after confessing that he had turned off his brain for years (after meeting Cain)! Paul Cain was once an associate of Branham but had gone to ground for decades only to re-emerge in the late 80s. After convincing Wimber, he was brought to the international public in large conferences where he manifested the same type of clairvoyancy as Branham. For instance, he would write down messages on cards beforehand to be read out at the meeting. He would call out a name and read personal details for that person, usually regarding predications of what would happen in the future. This is more like an occult gathering than anything we see in scripture; it is plain divination. As with occultists the knowledge of the past is usually much more reliable than predications of the future (since the information was gained by demonic observation of the past and supernaturally communicated to the prophet). Cain's main predications about future events, such as the great revival to hit England in October 1990 or the statement that Clinton would be the greatest moral president since Lincoln, have all failed. Other famous proponents of such prophecy, such as KCP mentor Bob Jones, were subsequently exposed for 'gross sexual sin' and expelled; the personal prophecies were used in order to gain an authoritative hold over vulnerable people who were then exploited. John Paul Jackson was also taken out of ministry by Wimber. Cain himself was later exposed as an alcoholic and homosexual at the time he was ministering in the UK. Mike Bickle, leader of the KCP, confessed to serious errors of teaching and practice when ministering in England, but this did not stop almost every UK Charismatic leader supporting their ministry in a published document. None have repented of this publicly to my knowledge. These examples follow the typical historic pattern of Charismatic or enthusiast prophets. Despite this, David Pytches wrote a sensational book (*Some Said it Thundered*, 1990) promoting the KCP, which contained so many errors, lies and exaggerations that Wimber urged him not to publish; it became necessary reading for every Charismatic. Even Cain stated that many of the stories were untrue. However, all this deceit prepared the way for the next demonic explosion.

The Toronto Experience arose from the theological roots of Word Faith, itself a combination of Letter Rain ideas combined with overt occult principles derived from PP Quimby, New Thought, EW Kenyon and Kenneth Hagin. Rodney Howard-Browne, originator of the movement, was originally an evangelist with the Rhema (i.e. Word Faith) Church in Johannesburg and was closely connected to Kenneth Copeland, king of the Word Faith Movement, Kenneth Hagin and Benny Hinn. From these, Randy Clark of St Louis and John Arnot of Toronto Airport Vineyard Church got involved. Arnot invited Clark to do four meetings in January 1994, but these continued for weeks. By September 35,000 people had visited and the explosion was under way, the UK seeing the strongest demonstrations of the exotic phenomena. But personal predictive prophecy undergirded much of this. Copeland prophesied over Howard-Browne about the results of his ministry. Howard-Browne made many prophecies about the outcome of the 'Blessing', such as: that people touched by it would all do miracles; that people would fall at their feet in shopping malls saying, 'I see Jesus in you'. [At the time of this nonsense there was a move of God which some called revival in Baptist seminaries (e.g. Wheaton) and schools in the US where people were soundly converted, where repentance was visible with manifest fruits

and where many committed their lives to Christian ministry. But this never made major headlines as it was unconnected to Toronto.]

Since this time the prophetic movement has expanded in all directions. The Latter Rain objectives of controlling the world through prophets and apostles is now being actively pursued. Such prophets repeatedly condemn those evangelicals who oppose this movement, sometimes including threats of violence or at least using violent imagery.<sup>11</sup> This alone proves that these prophets cannot be from God. Having been softened up through accepting the delusions of radical Charismatic movements in the past 30 years, Charismatic churchgoers have been on an upward ascent of mystical deceit resulting in the easy acceptance of almost any crazy idea (note the gold dust or gold fillings nonsense or the failure to see that Todd Bentley is a false prophet). Books abound that are literally full of heretical teaching, imagery and direction, such as those by ‘prophet’ Rick Joyner, which all become best-sellers.

**Occult sources:** Divination is one of the three branches of the occult. It is the attempt to foretell the future by use of many different means. These include: auguring (e.g. from examining a sacrificed animal’s entrails), astrology, consulting books like the I Ching after casting yarrow sticks, numerology, Tarot cards, crystal balls, consulting a medium, holding a séance or using a Ouija Board, palmistry and understanding omens. Little point would be served by examining each of these and most are generally familiar. The essence of occult practices is to gain knowledge and assistance from supernatural powers, and knowledge of the future has often been the foremost desire. Professional soothsayers [= prophets] and wizards [= sorcerers or magicians, manipulators of Black Magic] were appointed by pagan kings in order to gain such knowledge to procure an advantage over their enemies or prepare for hard times. The cases of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar or Joseph and Pharaoh are examples of this; both these saints superseded occult wizards. With the modern focus upon individuality and selfishness, personal divination is more popular than ever. Astrology pages in newspapers are read first by many people, especially women; astrology slots even appear on BBC radio every afternoon. The rise of the New Age is but a popular flowering of ancient occultism, woven together in various strands and cast into new moulds. Divination features strongly in many New Age cults. It should also be noted that paganism is the fastest growing religion in the UK and divination is a chief constituent of witchcraft. The modern Charismatic focus upon personal predictive prophecy parallels the rising interest in modern divination.

**Conclusion:** Any form of divination is condemned by God (Lev 19:26); it is seeking forbidden knowledge of the future instead of trusting God moment by moment. Any form of predictive personal prophecy merely takes a person’s attention off Christ and places it in man’s word. It is the most stupid thing to do. Believers are to look to Christ and not trust in the soothsaying of men. Any that do are following satanic practices and not God.

And the LORD said to me, ‘The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.’ (Jer 14:14)

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I *am* indeed against you,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.’ (Ezek 13:8-9)

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<sup>11</sup> Regarding his critics Benny Hinn said, ‘I wish I could just ... find one verse that says, “If you don’t like ‘em, kill ‘em”... don’t attack God’s servants ... you stink... I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun – I blow your head off.’ [TBN’s Praise The Lord Show, 9.11.90.]

## DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

**Description:** The exorcism of evil spirits (demons) from believers by the use of various means and, chiefly, the authority mediated through the spoken name of Jesus. This is used almost like a spell or ritual incantation and often involves shouting it repeatedly. In some Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries the vehemence against the evil spirit is directed against the sufferer with physical blows. On many occasions this has resulted in bodily damage and, on some occasions, death (e.g. after Smith Wigglesworth punched a man in the stomach to get rid of a demon. NB the recent example of Todd Bentley who took a running punch at a man's stomach with such force that it knocked teeth out).

**Claimed scriptural support:** Texts demonstrating the ministry of Jesus and the apostles in expelling evil spirits from various people.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There is very little evangelical evidence which Charismatics can lean on, other than the precursors of their own movement and the ritual ministry of Roman and Anglican priests. In the Middle Ages exorcism was a part of the infant baptism service. Early Lutheran baptismal services and the first Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549) also contained a brief exorcism prayer – but this was not a formal exorcism in the Charismatic sense but a renunciation of the devil and his works. Such renunciation, as part of a baptismal service, began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the east. The early father Cyril (315-386) describes how this occurred in his writings.

**Origins:** There are some stories of exorcisms occurring in the Welsh Revival of 1904 and subsequently in Welsh chapels, but there is little written evidence describing this. However, Jessie Penn Lewis wrote much about demonic warfare after her experiences in the Welsh Revival (see *War on the Saints* in its original unexpurgated edition).

While there have always been Pentecostals that have practised this ministry, for decades it was a fringe subject, usually evidenced by itinerant evangelists or radical preachers. Indeed some Classical Pentecostals objected to it as unbiblical, rightly denying that Christians can be possessed. However, with the rise of heretical Latter Rain theology in the 1940s, it became more mainstream, and was particularly evidenced in the subsequent Healing Revival of the 1950s. After this it became normal practice, even though Pentecostals admit that there is no fully formed theology of it in major bodies, nor is there unanimity on the teaching or practice of it. When Charismatics began to slowly adopt Pentecostal practices after the early 1960s, exorcism remained a marginalised subject for many years. Most UK Renewal ministries denied it throughout the 1960s and 70s. It started to re-appear in Restoration churches in the later 70s and early 80s, but became generally acceptable through the ministry of John Wimber. It had been a normal part of Word Faith practice before this time, based upon their root influences from occultism and the Mind Sciences via New Thought, Unity, EW Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin and others. In the broad Signs and Wonders Movement there was a coalescing of occult teaching and practice and in time exorcism (with the re-appearance of specialist deliverance ministries) became normal practice amongst most Charismatics, particularly those in the New Church (Restorationism). Today there are even specialist centres in former stately homes where deliverance is the chief focus of residential counselling ministry (such as Ellet Grange). The stories emanating from this ministry are truly shocking examples of spiritual, psychological, mental, physical and sexual abuse. Some are almost Medieval in their use of aberrant sacramental rituals, well-deserving their scandalous exposure on the BBC *Everyman* series and various books (such as *Charismania*).

**Occult sources:** Exorcism has a long history amongst heathen religions and occult groups. It is a basic part of shamanism, seen in the ritual services of a medicine man. When sickness or bad things happen, animists blamed evil spirits and sought the help of good spirits to vanquish the demons and bring good luck. Thus exorcism was a natural part of any animistic religion. Even Jews had formal exorcists and there is an example of an exorcism in the Apocrypha. Researchers into the occult consider that exorcism is a central

phenomenon in occultism and particularly in Satanism (e.g. *Dict. of cults, sects, religions and the occult*, p101; 1993 ed.).

**Conclusion:** While it may be possible that some unregenerate sinners may require pastoral help to overcome reliance upon demonic forces when coming to Christ (especially in cases involving witchcraft, addiction, homosexuality or pornography), there is no case for the exorcism of believers. There is no teaching on this in the Bible at all. Cases of exorcism were performed by Christ and the apostles as part of the advance of the kingdom in dealing with the unregenerate. Believers are never told to seek exorcism and there is no teaching on how pastors should do this. The normal scriptural teaching on dealing with sin, repentance and sanctification cover all that a disciple needs in leading a holy life.

The basic premise in the exorcism of believers is a denial of the truth of God's word and the work of Christ. Indeed, it verges on blasphemy. All believers have become a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17); they are united with him and have a new nature created after his likeness (Eph 4:24). They are taken from the dominion of sin and Satan and translated into the kingdom of God (Col 1:13). But more than that they are made sons of God. Adoption (a corollary of justification) enables them the privileges of heirs with Christ in God's family (Rm 8:17). As new creations they are the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19-20; 2 Cor 6:16). As saved they are taken out of the kingdom of Satan (Eph 5:8). Their life principle is the Holy Spirit who indwells them so that for them to live is Christ (Gal 2:20). To teach that such people need exorcism is to deny all this and seek to make holy the old nature, which scripture tells us continues to be corrupted until we die (Eph 4:22). Thus it is blasphemous to teach that the body which God indwells is the possession of a demon. Neither can Charismatics avoid all this by teaching that demon possession is not a possession but an oppression, or being 'demonised' since the Greek words used (*daimonizomai*, 'to be demonised' or *echein deimonion*, 'to have a demon') absolutely imply possession and control.

The claim that believers can be demonised is thus a denial of the salvation God has given his elect. The teaching that believers may need to be delivered of evil spirits is a lie that emanates straight out of the occult.

## SACRAMENTALISM

**Description:** Sacramentalism<sup>12</sup> is the use of material objects or objective rituals in order to promote a spiritual experience or bring about blessing from God. Christianity acknowledges two Biblical sacraments (baptism and the Lord Supper) which are external signs that demonstrate an inward spiritual truth or grace. These two objective acts, performed in obedience to God's word are a means of grace to genuine believers. However, Roman Catholicism advocates seven sacraments without Biblical support (baptism, confirmation, communion, penance, anointing of the sick, ordination, and matrimony). Other sacramental objects would include holy water, the relics of saints and so on.

Some Charismatic churches and organisations have used endless varieties of unbiblical rituals and objects in the attempt to bring about some divine blessing, often some kind of healing. The most obvious are those who use gems and semi-precious stones to aid meditation or healing prayer. Others have used swords to 'knight' people in order to make them better spiritual warriors, while one pastor did this with an umbrella since he had no sword. Other Charismatic leaders have dressed up in armour to lead meetings.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Sacrament' is Latin for the Greek word, 'mystery'. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were called 'mysteries' by the ancient church because they outwardly symbolised the participation of believers in the union of God and man effected by Christ's atonement. Augustine first gave the definition of, '*an outward and temporal sign of an inward and enduring grace*'.

When the film *Braveheart* was playing in theatres, one leader dressed up like the William Wallace character played by Mel Gibson.

Ritualistic ceremonies performed by Charismatics are legion. One Hove Messianic Church blew ram's horns on the South Downs to bring about a revival. The Assemblies of God church in Brownsville Pensacola, at the height of the frenzied emotionalism, set up a copy of the Jewish altar of incense while a leader, dressed in the regalia of the High Priest, convinced a large number of leaders and wives (including famous British leaders) to burn a note containing their problems in order to bring release. The Jesus Army have repeatedly established sacraments that are like fetishes or talismans, such as getting everyone at a conference to bring a washed stone and pile up a cairn at the foot of the platform to affirm their repentance and commitment.<sup>13</sup> They also made wooden crosses, which were then prayed over, and given to folk to enable special grace. The Jesus Army also encouraged everyone to wear a nail at the Wembley Praise-Day in 1999 to dramatically symbolise '*willing discipleship ... commitment to a life of self-denial and sacrifice*'.<sup>14</sup> Seven Assemblies of God pastors smashed bricks with a sledge hammer while an evangelist threw a bottle of oil into a river as an expression of 'prophetic symbolism' in order to encourage an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Australia.<sup>15</sup> Benny Hinn planned to set up a healing centre in Dallas that will have '*Healing Statues of Biblical saints from the Old Testament. It's going to have a Healing Fountain an Eternal Healing Fire*'.<sup>16</sup>

Other items and actions regularly used to symbolise or impart spiritual power include: flag waving, banners, candles, marching round the room, crosses, pendants, medallions and so on. This sickening list could be prolonged.

**Claimed scriptural support:** Absolutely none. Some refer to the handkerchiefs and aprons taken from Paul to bring healing (Acts 19:12). However, this was an apostle called by Christ to bring the Gospel to superstitious Gentiles in Asia Minor. God exceptionally authenticated his ministry in the performance of special miracles and even by such an unusual event as distant healing via items from him. This was to convince the people that the man was from God and that they should listen to his message (Heb 2:4). Modern leaders are not Paul, have not been divinely commissioned to such apostleship and the message today needs no such confirmation, having been already confirmed as genuine for thousands of years.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** Only the sacramental objects and rituals of the Roman church until the aberrations of the Pentecostal churches initiated their own.

**Origins:** There are isolated examples of the use of unscriptural sacramental items throughout history, usually from aberrant groups which Charismatics would not want as precursors. But the practice became more widespread with the innovations of Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal leader AA Allen even distributed 'miracle saw-dust' from the floor of his 'miracle valley' tent.<sup>17</sup> Often these items were sold in order to bring healing, which is little different from the sale of indulgences by the pope to bring release of relatives from purgatory. Today US TV evangelists advertise healing for money or financial gain from a seed-gift and sometimes use a sacramental gift to promote this, such as prayed-over handkerchiefs or coupons.

**Occult sources:** The idea that charms or talismans have magical power or contain a helpful spirit is a pagan idea that is thousands of years old. 'Fetish' is the term usually applied to West African cults who believed that spirits could possess certain objects or ward off evil

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<sup>13</sup> *Jesus Life*, No. 46, (1998).

<sup>14</sup> *Jesus Life 2K #50*, 1999 4th Qtr, p3 and p9.

<sup>15</sup> *Vanguard*, Issue 10, May 1999, p9.

<sup>16</sup> Benny Hinn, from a Video screened on *This is Your Day*, 24 August, 1999; quoted from *Contending Earnestly For the Faith Journal*, 5.2, p21.

<sup>17</sup> *Contending Earnestly For the Faith Journal*, 5.2, p21.

spirits. This belief was taken to America and later developed in Voodoo and Santeria.<sup>18</sup> ‘Charm’ can be an object or an incantation which has supernatural powers, and is a term used in many occult religions. A ‘talisman’ is an object on which is engraved a character or picture that can harness supernatural power to protect the wearer. This differs from an ‘amulet’, which was worn to ward off evil spells; a practice going back to the ancient Egyptians. Regarding sacramental rites, there is no end to the variations of these in occult religions. The stupidity of Christians wearing special crosses, and such like, for power or blessing is similar to simple central European peasants wearing garlic to ward off vampires and no different from the superstition of ancient Egyptians wearing an ankh (a cross with a loop at the top symbolising life). The Charismatic idea of using the unbiblical sacramental rites listed above is straight out of ancient occultism.

**Conclusion:** We are commanded to live by God’s word alone; anything used for blessing, or to gain power, outside of the what the Bible teaches is forbidden and sinful. There is a scriptural basis for only two sacraments, that of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; any ceremony, rite, or religious object other than these is idolatry and idolatry is hated by God.

### SHOUTED INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS IN UNISON<sup>19</sup>

**Description:** This is the modern Charismatic practice of a congregation shouting prayers and intercessions at the same time in a cacophony of noise in order to multiply the effect.

**Claimed scriptural support:** None.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** None that I am aware of. Apologetics for aberrant practices are often not sought for amongst Charismatics.

**Origins:** There was a cult in China called ‘The Shouters’ who practised this, who were condemned by Watchman Nee (Nee To–Sheng). It was a fragmentation of Nee’s *Little Flock*, which had reached 300,000 members as part of a decentralised house church organisation in the 1940s. Small groups in isolated parts of China (probably Henan province) began to drift into error and a former co-worker of Nee’s called ‘Witness Lee’ built them into his own denomination (though he condemned denominations as satanic!). Corporate shouting while stamping the feet was part of the worship of this church (which was necessary for salvation), amidst other doctrinal errors (such as re-writing the Lord’s Prayer to read merely, ‘*Oh Lord Jesus*’). Lee took this cult to America where it was known as *Living Stream Ministries*. The practice migrated over the Chinese border and Li Changshou established a sect of the Shouters in South Korea, which grew rapidly to hundreds of thousands of people who treated Li Changshou as semi-divine. From there it was picked up by Yonggi Cho and became normal practice in his Charismatic Word Faith church. Visitors to this church brought the error back to the UK in the late 1980s where it was initially evidenced in Terry Virgo’s New Frontiers churches. There is some evidence that the Shakers engaged in this and there have been isolated moments in revivals where such uncontrolled behaviour broke out temporarily.

**Occult sources:** Corporate chanting and spontaneous corporate prayers has been common for thousands of years in many occult groups. Chanting of the same prayer by all is a feature of almost all institutional religions to some degree, but shouted simultaneous prayers are more common in cults and heathen sects.

**Conclusion:** I am reminded of the 1950s Shetland Revival, the beginning of which is attributed to the powerful prayer of a simple man; ‘**The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man**

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<sup>18</sup> Voodoo and Santeria are syncretistic cults based in the Caribbean. They are a combination of Roman Catholicism (learned from Spanish missionaries) and African witchcraft. Santeria is located in Cuba mainly founded upon Nigerian religions; voodoo (properly, Vodun) began in Haiti being inspired by the witchcraft cults of Dahomey (now Benin), but both have spread.

<sup>19</sup> Simultaneous performance or utterance of speech or action.

avails much' (Jm 5:16). The whole point of corporate prayer is that people can hear the prayers and say 'Amen' ['let it be so'] to them; 'how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?' (1 Cor 14:16).

Shouted unison prayers are an offence to God and contradict his word, 'Let all things be done decently and in order' (1 Cor 14:40); both the shouting and the resulting conflict of sounds, causing obscurity, sins against this word.

## UNRESTRAINED DANCING

**Description:** This is spontaneous improvised dancing rather than formal arranged dancing. Many Charismatics see this as a joyful response to God during worship. Usually it tends to be brief jiggling around with uncomplicated movements. However, some radical churches encourage or allow long periods of sustained free dancing, which in some cases includes the use of prayer sticks (decorated colourful poles, sometimes with emblazoned figures or feathers). This was a feature of the Celtic spirituality fad of the latter 1990s, especially in the centre of it in the Revelation Church, Chichester (linked to Gerald Coates).

**Claimed scriptural support:** David's dance when the ark was restored to the city of David (2 Sam 6:14). Ps 149:3, **Let them praise His name with the dance**, also Ps 150:4; Eccles 3:4; Jer 31:4, 13. There are other verses describing the dancing of women in joy and celebration. Firstly, it must be remembered that spontaneous dancing was a natural feature of the social life in ancient Israel, as it still is in some old cultures. Dancing was merely a normal way to express joy or celebration in society. Such cultural forms are not to be forced upon alien societies. Secondly, this was part of the Old Covenant system of worship which has been entirely superseded by Christ's New Covenant. We cannot pick and choose what we want out of this cancelled system but must be guided by apostolic teaching only. Thus all of this is outlawed, not just the slaughter of bulls and goats. Christian worship must be regulated by what appears in the NT following Christ's commands. Thus even instrumental music is left behind as an Old Covenant fixture, which is why there is not a single mention of it in the NT. Dancing, as an Old Covenant item, is not evidenced in the NT and never encouraged by the apostles, who were all Jews.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** There are examples of dancing, but mostly these were called the 'jerks' and were exhibited in supposed emotional, Methodist revivals where great excitement broke out, such as at Cane Ridge. The Cornish Methodist preacher Billy Bray (1794-1868) was prone to get excited and jump in worship on occasion, though Charismatics rarely refer to him.

**Origins:** The prime origin is again the heretical Shakers; although their dances were actually organised and formal. Their name arises from their shaking under 'the power', which could resemble a spontaneous dance. There was also a sect called the 'Jumpers' though this was more pogoing than dancing, which began in western Wales in 1760 and was defended by William Williams. The congregation was encouraged to cry out 'gogoniant' (Welsh for 'glory') and such like, then to work themselves into a violent agitation, then to jump until they were exhausted and fall down on the floor. This was clearly typical of enthusiast and pagan excesses found in many aberrant groups and uncontrolled 'revivals'.

**Occult sources:** Multiple cases of ritual improvised dancing throughout history.

**Conclusion:** There is no apostolic sanction for dancing in worship. OT dancing was usually by women in spontaneous rejoicing, David was an individual exception in an unusual historic situation. But these references to dancing are as much a part of the Old Covenant as the sacrifice of bulls or worshipping in a temple under mediatorial priests. There is no sanction for this in the New Covenant; there is not even any precedent for instrumental worship – hence apostolic silence on both issues.

## **Fasting and asceticism**

**Description:** Abstaining from food, sex, pleasures, luxuries or even water in order to obtain grace or power in prayer. Ascetics take this further and use hard disciplines, or even pain to aid the effect.

**Claimed scriptural support:** OT scriptures; however, these have to be interpreted according to New Covenant revelation, and even OT prophecies such as Isaiah 58. There are no apostolic texts demanding that we fast and there is no mention of fasting in the NT church after Acts 14 or in the letters. The principle of fasting is to deny oneself in an objective form to encourage leaning upon God. But this goes against the whole tenor of apostolic teaching that we are to live by faith and be guided by the Spirit; that nothing we do in our fleshly life has any value in advancing our spirituality – which comes from the Spirit to the new man.

1 Cor 7:5 is referring to sexual fasting by mutual consent in order to concentrate upon prayer for a given time. There are some mentions of fasting in Acts; one by an unregenerate man (c. 10), which we can discount, and also in 13:2-3 in Antioch and 14:23 in other Asian churches. Acts was a time of transition and learning (as c. 10 makes clear for Peter) and some Jewish modes of religious practice died slowly (note the use of lots in 1:26 but never used again and the reference to kosher diet in c. 15). Paul personally fasted on occasion (2 Cor 6:5, 11:27), but he also performed other Jewish ceremonial actions [he cut off his hair in a Nazarite vow or as a thank offering in Acts 18:18 and even circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) – which he teaches against in Galatians, Colossians and 1 Corinthians.] But these were to facilitate his ministry of preaching the Gospel to Jews and to fellowship with Jews in Jerusalem in an exceptional time of transition (note 1 Cor 9:20). Paul withdrew certain personal liberties in order to help preach the Gospel. There are no references to fasting by any other apostles, and no commands to fast. The idea that fasting, a human physical effort, could improve on the grace that God's sovereignly gives us by his good pleasure is unbiblical.

**Claimed historical evangelical support:** Multiple cases of church fasting and some using asceticism, especially the Roman Church.

**Origins:** Many and various in many church traditions.

**Occult sources:** Again, many and various. Fasting and asceticism has a long history in occult groups. An example is on Mount Carmel where the priests of Baal believed that cutting themselves would give power to their prayers (1 Kg 18:28).

**Conclusion:** Fasting is a type of sacramentalism that has now been superseded by the Gospel, the New Covenant in Christ's fullness.

## **Laying on of hands to impart power or gifts**

**Description:** A leader lays hand on a person's head to identify with him and pass on a spiritual gift or experience. This is commonly practised by any Charismatic believer in order to bring the Baptism of the Spirit to another.

**Claimed scriptural support:** OT ministry amongst priests and prophets, sometimes to symbolise transference of power. In the NT it is mentioned in Heb 6:2, but without definition and is probably here linked to baptism and symbolic of inclusion in the church. There are instances in Acts (8:17-19, 9:17, 19:6, 28:8) regarding receiving the Spirit and healing. These are always linked to cases of apostles or their delegates fulfilling God's plan in the formation of the early church having power that is not generally experienced in church history (Ananias in 9:17 being the only debatable case of an apostolic delegate). The special use of this power was part of the divine authentication of Gospel preaching and

the establishment of a divine community filled with the Spirit, Note Heb 4:3-4, 'how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?' Note this was ministry from people who had heard Christ, something not possible today. Again this is part of the transitional period covered by the Acts. We are to be guided by apostolic command and teaching, which are the final words of Christ to his church, and there is no apostolic command for saints to submit to laying on of hands in order to receive power. Indeed, sufficient power for any eventuality is repeatedly explained as being available to saints in Christ as part of the New Covenant. This power is particularly evident during times of affliction, tribulation and suffering (Col 1:11).

2 Tim 1:6 must be taken with 1 Tim 4:14. In the former it is Paul's hands, in the latter is the hands of the eldership. Therefore this was not an individual laying on hands willy-nilly, but was a gift that God sovereignly bestowed on Timothy (prophecy) when he was appointed to eldership in the church. There is no ground here for any person who feels like it to lay hands on people with out divine sanction, indeed Paul condemns such practice (1 Tim 5:22, even if he is referring to ordination here).

What is crucial to the apostles is the constant focus upon Christ for strength, power, and all things (see 2 Cor 12:9; Eph 3:16, 6:10; Phil 4:13) which the Charismatic laying on of hands diverts away from Christ to mere men. So, there is a valid laying on of hands, such as in commissioning men to ministry in the church or in the ministry of genuine elders (Jm 5:14-15); but there is no sanction for anyone to perform this in Christ's name in any way that they want. Modern believers must not think that they can practise features that are common to divinely called OT prophets & priests, or divinely commissioned apostles of the Lord, unless there is a command or teaching about it, as in the case of baptising believers. Because Paul was protected from a snakebite does not mean that anyone can automatically expect the same protection, as the cases of death and sickness amongst snake-handling Pentecostals confirms. Mark 16:16-20 needs much better exegesis than it is commonly subjected to. Neither does it mean that because Isaiah went naked for three years that all must do this (Isa 20:3). We must follow divine teaching passed on from Christ through his apostles, and understand the OT in the light of methods made clear by apostolic precedent. **Claimed historical evangelical support:** This has always been used in the ritual of ordination to formal ministry as a sign of identification between the leader and the church. However, certain groups have used this technique in seeking to bring healing, or deliverance.

**Origins:** In the Charismatic sense of impartation, this came to the fore in Latter Rain ministry. It was a chief feature of Franklin Hall's teaching in the sense of impartation. It was also common in Pentecostalism to bring Spirit-baptism, but without the sense of impartation.

**Occult sources:** Again this has been evidenced for thousands of years. We have earlier referred to the modern Hindu example of Guru Maharaj Ji, which is typical of many, and also to kundalini yoga where the merest touch of an adept upon a willing, submissive disciple can instantly bring on violent paroxysms. The idea of transference through laying on of hands is common in occult practice. When the laying of hands includes the sense of passing on what is in the person laying the hands to another, this is occultic. Transference of an experience is occultic rather than Biblical.

**Conclusion:** There is no time here to discuss the doctrine of the Baptism in the Spirit, except to say that there is no apostolic command to seek such an experience and the meaning of the term is explained by Paul in 1 Cor 12:13. It is a once-for-all experience (unequivocally an aorist tense) whereby the church was grafted into the body of Christ by the Spirit unifying us in him and indwelling us. If it is once-for-all it cannot be a repeated subjective experience. The idea of a powerful emotional experience being passed on from adept to novice through the laying on of hands is a very common occult theme. Great care needs to be taken to understand verses in Acts which speak of this, where it is usually

called 'receiving the Spirit', and in the Gospels, where it is pointing forward to what 1 Cor 12:13 explains as having occurred after the cross.

The use of laying on of hands in passing on, imparting, or transferring power from one man to another is exceptionally dangerous. Modern Charismatics do not just submit to this to receive the Spirit, as old Pentecostals did, but go to a man repeatedly to receive all sorts of rogue experiences that purport to be power transference – healing, deliverance, power, encouragement or just falling over for no reason other than being blessed! This sort of behaviour is to be condemned; indeed it is clearly hazardous, as the many cases of psychological damage after such ministry demonstrates.

## **A discussion of the proliferation of witchcraft in the west today**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the rapid and prolific growth of occult practices. So much so that it is likely that there is more witchcraft around today than ever before in history, largely due to the growth of the world's population. There is a huge explosion of witchcraft in the USA, many of these are lesbians, feminists and former nuns. The popularisation of the occult in the media, novels and Hollywood has both enticed the interest of young minds and inured the caution of adults. In the UK paganism is the fastest growing religion and many occult disciplines are being formally promoted by commercial and government bodies as successful means of training.

However, even outright black magic is openly practised without restraint or condemnation. Take the example of the Liberian president in the 1980s, Samuel Doe; he depended upon juju [African black magic] mediums and had female virgins sacrificed so that he could ritually bathe in their blood. When Countess Elisabeth Bathory tortured and killed 650 young girls in the late 1500s to wash in their blood, at least the Transylvanian aristocracy had the sense to execute her aides and imprison her for life by bricking her up in her castle chamber. But neither surrounding African nations nor the 'moral' west did anything in Liberia. Unsurprisingly the nation plunged into civil war for 14 years. More recently when an aunt of the Gambian president Yahya Jammeh died this year, Jammeh was convinced she had died of a curse and imported witch doctors from Guinea to roam the villages with armed police imprisoning over 1,000 suspected witches. These were given hallucinatory drugs to make them confess and then savagely beaten; some died as a result.

In Angola and Congo sick and orphaned children are often accused of sorcery and killed. Cults within Nigeria's university campuses practice juju to terrify rivals and people are assassinated. In East Africa witch doctors sell potions made from albino body parts; in Tanzania at least 45 albinos have been killed for body parts in the last two years.<sup>20</sup> The high proliferation of black Africans in England ensured that this religion was transferred. Recent horrific murders of infants have been associated with occult African rituals.

Such ritualistic thinking remained in the mindset of some African émigrés who adopted Christianity. When Pentecostalism was born in America it flowered amongst the Black African American people and many ritual forms were adopted into the Black American Pentecostal churches. The early services of such churches horrified contemporary evangelicals who condemned the raucous music with its emphasis upon rhythm, the swooning of women, the unrestrained behaviour, uncontrolled dancing, affirmative shouting from the congregation, the emotionalism, aberrations based upon supposed spiritual gifts and so on. Since then some of the practices of certain Black Pentecostal Churches have become little more than overt occultism. Over time some of this behaviour became acceptable in Caucasian churches as society became more liberated. After the 60s social revolution and the birth of the Charismatic Movement even more of these practices were accepted but the origins of them forgotten.

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<sup>20</sup> Source, *The Week*, 11/4/09, p16.

To this was added occultism that had originated from other sources, particularly the Mind Sciences and the urge to gain power to heal and work miracles through mental healing, but also the occult philosophy of Carl Jung, his disciple Morton Kelsey and his disciple Agnes Sanford. The Mind Sciences had entered Word Faith via the syncretism of certain American movements over the previous 100 years, such as New Thought. In this the founder of mental healing in the US, PP Quimby (1802-1866),<sup>21</sup> had sought to merge occult ideas, eastern mysticism and Christianity. This thinking led to Christian Science and the formation of New Thought by his disciples. The roots of these were primarily the teachings and practices of Anton Mesmer who first brought the occult power of hypnotism to the west, added to the idea that all sickness was merely in the mind which simply required a mental change. This enflamed the hope of mind over matter and the opportunity to heal by right thinking and positive confession (essentially yoga). The key vehicle into Word Faith was through EW Kenyon. After this, layer upon layer of occult ideas began to influence certain churches.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the developments in bringing occult ideas to be accepted amongst religious people are so many that there is no time to properly document them here. These include Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Anthroposophy (Rudolph Steiner), the inroads of oriental mysticism, the redesign of ancient witchcraft by Gerald Gardner to promote Wicca as a genuine religion in 1954, the establishment of a multitude of Buddhist and Hindu sects, the secular acceptance of Hindu meditation, the promotion of Chinese Qigong and Hindu chakra; new Gnosticism, the new impetus to the study of Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen and new cults, etc. After the seeking and openness of the 60s hippie movement, many of the ideas behind these coalesced into what is termed New Age, itself a wide and diverse set of groups resting on a variety of occult principles. As all these grew, occult thinking and practice began to encroach upon Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. There was thus a parallel development in the secular and religious world where occult ideas invaded thinking. In some movements the occult practices openly flowered briefly in supposed evangelical churches, such as Latter Rain, only to go underground for a while; but all the time there was a slow invasion of thinking so that what was once condemned as heretical became accepted only a few decades later.

New disciplines evolved that had been based upon occult thinking but transformed into acceptable forms. Thus the emergence of emotional healing, inner healing, Christian psychotherapy, exorcism, faith healing, positive confession and visualisation. Teachers became popular whose thinking had been unintentionally (?) moulded by occult ideas, such as: Agnes Sanford,<sup>22</sup> Franklin Hall,<sup>23</sup> Ruth Carter Stapleton,<sup>24</sup> EW Kenyon,<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Hagin,<sup>26</sup> and Morton Kelsey.<sup>27</sup> After this the big guns emerged who gathered various forms of occult practice in conjunction with gathering a big church or movement: Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Paul Yonggi Cho, etc.

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<sup>21</sup> Quimby sought to make witchcraft credible by using scientific and Christian language. Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science came direct from Quimby's ideas and Eddy was healed by Quimby himself in 1862.

<sup>22</sup> Agnes Sanford is a popular Christian writer whose ideas are almost New Age and Pantheistic. Her ideas are Jungian, combined with Shamanistic occult techniques. She started the inner healing epidemic. See Hunt, *Seduction of Christianity*, chapter 9, for a concise summary of her zany and dangerous beliefs.

<sup>23</sup> The key influence for Latter Rain ideas. His theology is a complete mess of occultism mingled with Biblical concepts.

<sup>24</sup> Stapleton is a disciple of Sanford and promoter of inner healing. She has said that people can be 'born again' by listening to great music or staring at great works of art.

<sup>25</sup> Popularised New Thought concepts into various heretical teachings leading to a mystical shamanism which became a key influence of Word Faith through his plagiarist Kenneth Hagin.

<sup>26</sup> Leading proponent ('father') of Word Faith errors, disciple of the heretic E. W. Kenyon.

<sup>27</sup> Kelsey is an Episcopalian priest and Jungian psychologist who equates Jesus with a witch doctor having 'extra-sensory perception' as any shaman. He receives guidance from the dead, equates the Holy Spirit with 'the self' and commends false religions and divination. Wimber dedicated a seminar series to this man.

So, there has been at least three streams of occult invasion into evangelical churches throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These were:

1. *The Classical Pentecostal Churches* with mysticism developed from The Holiness Movement, itself derived from earlier occultism in groups like the Shakers and radical Methodists. To this was added the emphasis of the Black Pentecostal Churches, which had imbibed at least outward forms of West African witchcraft rituals and behaviour.
2. *The occultism derived from the Word Faith Movement, imbibed from the Mind Sciences* developed out of the occult thinking of Kenyon influenced by New Thought – a syncretism of Christianity, oriental mysticism and the ideas of Mesmer. For a while these two streams interacted in various ways with each other, some people straddling both, such as Oral Roberts and some events affecting both, such as Latter Rain theology.
3. *This mix was reformatted by John Wimber* who is massively significant since he was acceptable to so many groups. He was a single-handed ecumenical catalyst gathering several forms together. His teaching and practice was similar to Word Faith, but more effective. He had a background in Quaker subjective mysticism. His practice was similar to Pentecostalism, but with a better academic background. But he also could easily mix with Anglicans, Romanists, Academics (Fuller Seminary being a hotbed of these ideas, where he was a professor of church growth) and many other groups. All strands of UK Charismatics warmed to him so that, through him, opposing groups met together (such as Terry Virgo's and Gerald Coates' streams). This was the beginning of the Signs and Wonders Mvt., which saw the agglomeration of all the previous occult elements plus some more. Wimber, for instance, openly advocated the acceptance of a new paradigm – that of the Oriental mindset which did not rely upon scripture but upon subjectivity. He introduced Roman Catholic ideas, long rejected, such as the validity of relics but also overt occult concepts like acceptance of ghosts, maya, planetary influences, gods in trees & rivers, and other forms of shamanism.<sup>28</sup> Worst of all he denied the sufficiency of the Bible and was a pragmatist – if it works it's ok.<sup>29</sup> He also brought the apologetics of Agnes Sanford and Morton Kelsey, leading him to accept auras to define a person's problem.<sup>30</sup> Though accepted by many Reformed, Wimber was an Arminian on salvation and did not accept total depravity; his Gospel message was shocking. Further, many of his key influences were Roman Catholic: Francis MacNutt, Jesuits Father Dennis and Matthew Linn and others.

To these can be added the background influences now felt so powerfully in New Age cults. These include occult movements like Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, The Findhorn Centre, Rudolph Steiner, The Lorian Association and the writings of people like Mme. Helena Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, Annie Besant, David Spangler, and so on. Channelling is key in many of these where occult knowledge is received from spirits; different cults give them different names (ascended masters, elementals, aeons, angels etc.). Though not evangelical in any form, there have been many Christians who have been influenced by these groups, while some, such as Steiner, claim to be Christian. Certain American 'Christian' organisations and leaders are outright disciples of these occult teachings, such as Matthew Fox or the Unity cult.

From this eclectic platform new Christian movements were recently developed whereby principles of occult healing, occult power and occult control were wedded to

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<sup>28</sup> Wimber: *Signs Wonders and Church Growth*, section 3, 'Today's tension with the miraculous: world view'. Healing Seminar Syllabus, Section 2, *Healing in the NT* (1983), also Ministry Training Seminar, Part 2, Vineyard Christian Fellowship (1982), p1.

<sup>29</sup> *John Wimber, friend or foe?* St Matthias Press, p9-10. See also Media Spotlight: *The Vineyard*, p4, column 2.

<sup>30</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *How To Have A Healing Ministry Without Making Your Church Sick!* Regal, Ventura Calif. (1989), p228. These sorts of manifestations are called 'Cosmic reality' by Wimber. See *Healing Seminar Syllabus: 2 Observations, A Spiritual Phenomena*, p74-75.

strategies to establish a worldwide movement based on authoritarian ministries of apostles and prophets. Nothing less than the control of the world is sought by these folk in the apostolic and prophetic movement, or now, The New Apostolic Reformation.

From tinkering around with techniques to gain power of sickness or demons in ways that are prohibited by God's word, these folk have come by degrees into wedding themselves with many forms of occultism in order to attempt to gain control of the world. This is where we are today; the tragedy is that so few Christians understand this, although the evidence and the work of various writers is widely available.

To conclude this section: we can see that the last 100 or so years have seen a massive strategic development by Satan to flood the world with occult principles, unprecedented in history, at least not since Babel. These influences have pervaded secular thinking, commercial enterprises, government strategies, non-Christian religions, individual cults, institutional Christian churches and even evangelical denominations. At the same time there has been a flowering of the ancient occult religions and cults, some of which have formed new sects suited to modern life. This has been aided by the dumbing-down of the media and the acceptance of products that are themed round witchcraft, such as the Harry Potter films and many TV programmes. Added to this were changes in the law to legalise witchcraft. Occult features are now de-rigour. This is the preparation for the final deception and the control of the world by a fascist government established upon occult thinking. The book of Revelation, especially after chapter 13, explains this in vivid terms but assures believers of the victory of Christ over all.

A summary of this, in diagrammatic form, can be found in Appendix One.

## CONCLUSION

We could continue to add examples of sacrilegious practices but this paper is already much longer than I intended. We must draw this to a close. The basic underlying fault of Pentecostals and Charismatics has been to objectify worship and practice with new ideas; in other words they have trusted their eyes and not walked by faith; they have made a golden calf. By this I mean that they introduced objective things into church practice which they treated as divine. These things supposedly manifested divine power but in reality were ancient occult phenomena masquerading as gifts from God.

The root problem in all this is idolatry; manufacturing fleshly, objective things into the pure and simple worship of God. When the Israelites made the golden calf they were not abandoning the worship of YHWH; how could they since they had just been delivered from Egypt in an expression of the Lord's mighty power. However, being impatient, fearful and without leadership for a time (they thought that Moses may even be dead, Exod 32:1), they began to worship God in the way of the world – by using an idol to represent God and to aid human worship (Exod 32:4), which was corruption (Exod 32:7). Inevitably, as soon as you do this other incursions are added – ritual dancing, whelping, singing, shouting and so forth (Exod 32:6, 18-19) causing Joshua to think that it was the noise of war, so loud was the frenzy (Exod 32:17). The idolatry led to unrestrained behaviour and ruined God's testimony (Exod 32:25). Wrong worship always leads to sinful ethics and dishonours God.

The idolatry of Israel throughout its history, leading to two exiles, was of the same nature. Although there was occasional outright rebellion against the Lord, the problem was usually syncretism. This was when foreign idolatrous worship was mixed with true worship. Thus Jews went to the temple to pray and seek blessing but also went to the high places and worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth.<sup>31</sup> Spiritual adultery was the chief sin of Israel,

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<sup>31</sup> These were the supreme gods of the Canaanites, as the sun-god was in many ancient cultures following Nimrod. Baal means 'lord', Ashtoreth means 'star'; both needed to be appeased to ensure fertility and success

repeatedly condemned by the prophets. They stayed in relationship with God as his betrothed but played around with false gods as well.

This is what is occurring today. Charismatics believe that they are God worshippers but they are bringing 'strange fire' into their meetings. This equates to the profanity of Nadab and Abihu who offered profane fire to YHWH, for which they were consumed by fire from the Lord (Lev 10:1-2; Num 3:4, 26:61). Their crime was offering worship to God that was not commanded. This shows how important having a true regulative principle in worship is; only that which God expressly commands is to be done in Christian gatherings. Any human ideas entering into God's worship is profanity, but to introduce ancient occult practices is blasphemy and disobedience of the worst order.

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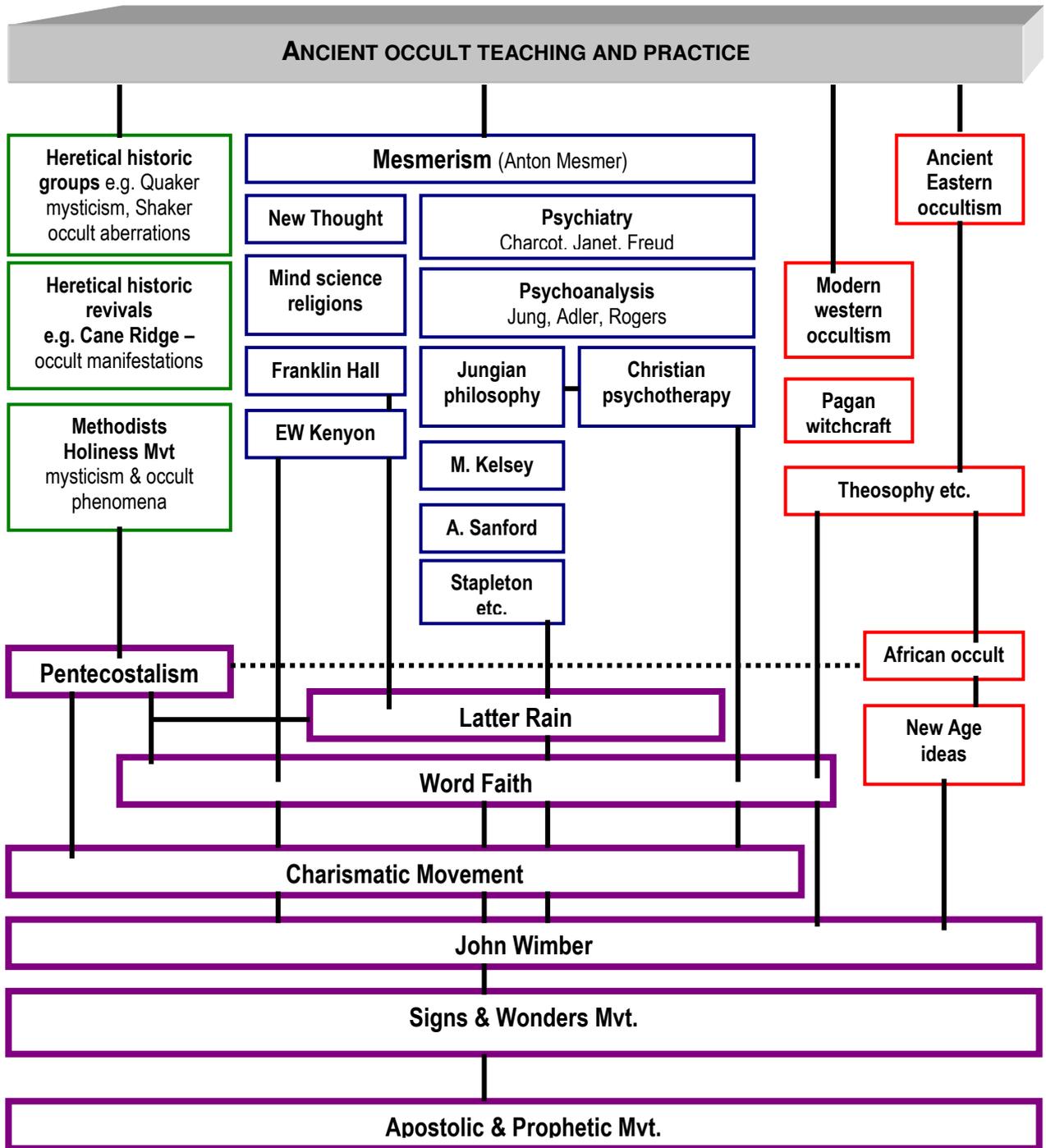
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in war. Ashtoreth was the moon goddess of the Phoenicians (and their allies the Philistines) and their chief female deity, representing the passive principle in nature. She was also known as 'the queen of heaven' (Jer 44:25); being associated with Baal, the sun-god, their chief male deity (Jud 10:6; 1 Sam 7:4, 12:10, 31:10). When they occur in the plural ('Ashtaroth', 'Baalim', Jud 2:11, 10:10; 1 Kg 18:18; Jer 2:23; Hos 2:17) it either refers to several idols or different modes of the god. Ashtoreth is spoken of as being Sidonian and equates to Ishtar of the Accadians & Assyrians and Astarte of the Greeks, Romans & Phoenicians (1 Kg 11:5, 33; 2 Kg 23:13; Jer 44:17). Solomon introduced the worship of this idol to Israel (1 Kg 11:33). Jezebel's priests were probably servants of Astarte (1 Kg 18:19). Baal = Molech (Jer 19:5) and was originally known to Israel as Baal-peor (Num 25:3; Deut 4:3). Baal worship was the main religion of the ten tribes in the time of Ahab (1 Kg 16:31-33, 18:19,22) and also for a time in Judah (2 Kg 8:27). It was only finally extinguished by captivity (Zeph 1:4-6).

# Appendix One



## Appendix Two

### Key Movements that paved the way for these occult intrusions

**Montanists** (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century)

**Medieval Mystics**

E.g: Simon the New Theologian (949-1022), Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), John Tauler (1300-1361).

**Post Reformation enthusiasts**

Schwenkfelders, Anabaptist extremists, the Zwickau Prophets.

**Post Reformation mystics**

Ignatius Loyola, Francis de Sales, Theresa of Avila, John of the Cross.

**The Society of Friends** (Quakerism, 1652+, then Radical Quakers & Shaking Quakers)

**The French Prophets** (Camisards, Cevenols, 1688+, Southern France resistance movement, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 by Louis XIV outlawing Protestantism. Then a sect in England formed by some French Huguenots.)

**Methodism** (1730+, UK then America)

**The Jansenists / Convulsionaires** (1726-1790, French ecstatic sect)

**The New Light Prophets** (1742+, New England, led by James Davenport, 1716-1757.)

**Shakers** (1770+, Manchester England, then New York State.)

**Methodist Camp Meetings** (e.g. Cane Ridge 1801, USA.)

**Charles Finney's revivalist methods and teaching** (1824+)

**Edward Irving** (1827+, then The Catholic Apostolic Church in London.)

**Early Holiness Movement**

Phoebe Palmer (1830's).

**The Mormons** (1830+, originally *Church of Latter Day Saints*, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young.)

**American healing Communes**

There were 120 community experiments in early-mid 1800's America, the most famous being The Oneida Community founded by John Humphrey Noyes in New York. Others included: *Zoar* in Ohio, *Brook Farm* in Massachusetts, *Amana* community in Iowa, the Rappite community *Harmony* in Pennsylvania and the black utopia *Nashoba* in Tennessee, as well as the Shakers in Kentucky and the Mormons in Salt Lake. Frank Sandford (1862-1948) was a 'Holiness' teacher who established a healing community at 'Shiloh' in Durham, Maine in 1893+.

**The Seventh Day Adventists (1840's)**

Founded by William Miller (hence also known as 'Millerites') who died in 1849 after prophesying that the world would end in 1843. Ellen Gould White became its most famous teacher who was considered to be a prophet.

**Various exuberant revivals**

The Skye Revival of 1841-2 spreading to the Outer Hebrides, particularly Uist; the Irish 1859 and Welsh 1904 revivals.

**Various healing ministries**

Johann Christoph Blumhardt: in 1843 this Lutheran pastor became famous when he prayed for a dying girl, in a Black Forest village, and saw her recover. He formed a faith home in 1852 at Bad Boll. Dorothea Trudel (1851+) saw healings in response to prayer in the Swiss village of Mannedorf; she opened up a number of faith homes with Samuel Zeller. Otto Stockmeyer 1867: his book, *Sickness and the Gospel*, and his frequent speeches at the Keswick conventions made him famous to Britains and Americans. A. J. Gordon referred to him as the leading theologian of healing by faith.

**The Holiness Movement (1867+)**

The *National Holiness Camp Meeting Association* originated in 1867 by Eastern Methodists to promote holiness and camp meetings in a revivalist fashion, and was led by Phoebe Palmer, John Inskip and others. After 1875 the meetings began to be influenced by Keswick teaching. The 'pentecostal power' of the second blessing began to be emphasised. Sanctification thus led to power for service, not heart perfection. By the 1890's both Keswick in England and the Holiness Methodists in America were identifying the second blessing with Pentecost or 'the upper room', with the appearance of long 'tarrying' meetings for those wanting 'sanctification'. Many hymns arose stressing the second blessing as, not just a cleansing, but also a reception of power. Note the black Holiness Movement, the black Restorationist Movement and the healing movement. Note AB Simpson, founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance.

**Maria Beulah Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924)**

A famous holiness preacher who embraced the Pentecostal church after 1912. Unusual manifestations began to attend her meetings before the events at Azusa Street in about 1885. Her powerful spiritual experiences date from a Quaker meeting in 1879.

**Pentecostalism****Latter Rain (1948+)****Charismatic Movement (1960+)****UK Restoration Movement (1978+) American Word Faith Movement****Signs & Wonders Movement (1985+)****Apostolic & prophetic Movement (1990+, now, New Apostolic Reformation)**

## Appendix Three

### A simple timeline

1800	1850	1900	1950	1960	1980	1990	2000s
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Cane Ridge and other Camp Meetings early 1800s.

Voodoo flourishing from end of 18<sup>th</sup> c. Mesmerism and hypnotism gains ground.

Finney's revivalism 1824-32.

Holiness Movement 1840+

Edward Irving –prophetics 1825+ & Charismatic gifts 1831+; Catholic Apostolic Church 1830s.

Dispensationalism starts 1830+ (Irvingites then Darby). Secret Rapture concept arises from a sick girl's vision.

Various cults & Sects form, e.g Mormons (1827+)

Spiritualist Mvt begins (1843). Bahaii faith begins. Revival of magic under Eliphas Levi.

PP Quimby active (1830+); modern Gnosticism, Mind Sciences. New Thought (1890).

Christian Science (1866). Unity (1887). Theosophy 1875+.

Vedanta Society arrives in US (1895).

Ordo Templi Orientis (sexual magic, Satanism). Golden Dawn (1887 magic).

Psychoanalysis. UFOs first sighted 1896.

Pentecostalism (1900 +). Azusa St (1906-10).

Anthroposophy (Steiner) 1913.

Wicca developed by Gardner. Aleister Crowley.

Edgar Cayce (occultist). Urantia Soc. (1934+)

Latter Rain revival at Sharon Fellowship (1948+). F. Hall & W. Branham.

Rastafarianism (1930) Qigong in west 1953.

Unification Church (Moonies) 1954 Scientology 1955.

Healing Revival, W. Branham. 1950s.

Hippie Mvt. 1960s. ISKON (Hindu cult), TM.

Charismatic Mvt 1960+.

New Age Mvt 1970s+.

UK Restorationism 1980s.

Word Faith

Signs & Wonders Mvt 1985+.

Toronto 1994+

Pensacola.

New Apostolic Ref.

Many more items could be added to this brief list but the pattern that emerges is clear. The ground established by one group enables the next to proceed further into occultism, both in secular and religious circles. Thus we see an ascent into a satanic strategy (man trying to be God), held up for thousands of years but now allowed by God to accelerate to form part of his end-time plan to fill up the sin of mankind and prepare for judgment.

Before the 1800s, enthusiast, frenzied, millennial and Charismatic movements were isolated, marginalised and localised. A few groups were able to form denominations for a time, such as the Shakers, but the general evangelical church condemned all fanatical behaviour. But over 200 years this gradually changed to the point where the majority of evangelicals now accept all the uncontrolled behaviour and occult manifestations that were previously condemned and short-lived; it was not long ago that Pentecostalism itself was condemned by all evangelicals, some vociferously.<sup>32</sup> The damage has been effected by the inroads of Pentecostalism and particularly the Charismatic Movement. In truth, the Charismatic Movement has been a Trojan Horse to invite the enemy within the camp.

<sup>32</sup> Campbell Morgan, Martyn Lloyd-Jones' predecessor, called it, 'The last vomit of Satan'.