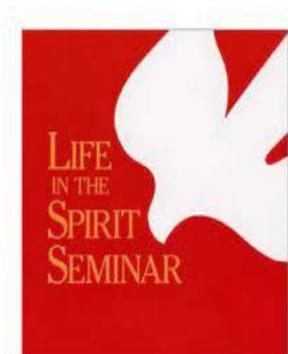


The Anglican Historical Society of New Zealand *Te Rōpu Hītori o te Hāhi Mīhinare ki Aotearoa*

The Arrival of the Life in the Spirit Seminars in New Zealand, and their Spread in the Diocese of Auckland

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(AHS Newsletter 49, June 2012)



The **Life in the Spirit Seminars** (LISS) arrived in New Zealand soon after their publication due to the providence of God and the abilities of the Rev Ray Muller.

Ray Muller learned of the charismatic movement when he heard of a move of the Holy Spirit at Yale University and wrote to the President of the Student Union seeking further explanation. He subsequently contacted the Rev Dennis Bennett of St Luke's Episcopal Church, Seattle and invited him to New Zealand for a speaking tour which occurred in 1966 and had wide impact.

In 1971-72, Ray and his wife Elaine went to England to work with the Rev Michael Harper and the Fountain Trust, an English-based charismatic renewal ministry. There he met a number of the leaders of the renewal from the United States including Fr. Francis MacNutt and Dr. Kevin Rannaghan. He invited Kevin Rannaghan to conduct a speaking tour of New Zealand and to minister at the Summer Schools which Ray intended to initiate on his return to New Zealand. Ray and Elaine were invited to visit the Ann Arbor Community on their way back to New Zealand. There they experienced a large Catholic

charismatic conference of about 14,000 people and Ray attended the National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Committee meeting who were going through the final versions of the LISS. They gave Ray a copy of the final draft of the LISS to bring back to New Zealand¹ and this was used at a training weekend Ray held at Otaki Lodge in late 1972 where a number of Anglican renewal leaders were introduced to the Seminars.²

Ray and others formed Christian Advance Ministries³ with leaders from Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Catholic churches and their first Summer Schools were held in Palmerston North and Lincoln in January 1973.⁴ Kevin Rannaghan introduced the LISS at the Schools and also at packed meetings in the Auckland and Christchurch Town Halls. As a result, the first LISS were held in many places in New Zealand during 1973.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Auckland commenced using the LISS sometime in 1973. They began by taking the members of the Auckland Service Group through the Seminars with about twelve participants meeting in Liston House. This group then became four small prayer groups which later reunited to commence the Prayer and Praise meeting in St Patrick's Cathedral probably in 1975. This grew rapidly and at its height they were starting new LISS each week to teach newcomers about what was happening in the prayer meeting, which frequently had the Cathedral about three-quarters full. After a few years this was dispersed to regional prayer meetings in places such as

Northcote, St Heliers Bay, Pakuranga, Mt Eden/Mt Roskill, Manurewa and Henderson. The move to the suburbs was partly to disperse dissension between leaders and partly a natural growth of leadership being ready to lead area groups. They were also addressing the question: 'What comes after the Seminars?'⁵

The first Anglican use of the Seminars appears to have been at St Paul's, Symonds Street. In his book on the first decade of renewal at St Paul's 'To God be the Glory'⁶ Harcourt Merritt reports that during 1972 St Paul's members who had been attending the very popular home prayer meeting in Wyn Fountain's home on Friday nights felt led to commit more deeply to life at St Paul's where they also attended a Wednesday night prayer meeting. They began investigating LISS in August 1972 (which suggests that someone from there had attended the introductory event at Otaki Lodge) and offered the first Seminar in February 1973.⁷ Ten or twelve members of St Paul's took part in the first Seminar. The vicar, Father Kenneth Prebble also encouraged Wyn Fountain to become active in the Seminars and Merritt records; 'Our Baptist friend remembered, 'It was as a result of (Fr Prebble's) encouragement that the Life in the Spirit Seminars flourished in Auckland.' He pressed me strongly to become involved in them.' Convinced of the seminar's importance Wyn Fountain set out to influence others until within a very short time there were over 40 churches involved.⁸

Assembly of God Pastor, John Childers, who was on the staff at St Paul's,⁹ understood that they were the first group to start the seminars. John regarded the introduction of the LISS, along with the St Paul's music ministry, as the two most important and significant ministries undertaken by St Paul's. In the Seminars, he said, 'we were reaching out and seeing people from all over the place being baptised in the Spirit.'¹⁰ The Seminars were initially held on Monday nights.¹¹

On the departure of Fr Prebble in 1974 the Seminars were suspended and restarted in April 1975 following the arrival of the new vicar, Father David Balfour, when they were moved to the Wednesday evenings. Fr David's vision was that the prayer meeting and seminars would run concurrently so that people could return to the prayer meeting after the seminars, believing that the two groups would strengthen and help the candidates to bond with other members of St Paul's. Merritt's description of one such evening deserves quotation in full: 'The change led to one of the most wonderful spiritual happenings which ever took place in St Paul's. It occurred when one of the seminar groups assembled for the fifth seminar in the series. It is a very important lesson and is entitled, 'Commitment.' On this particular night Father David for a change, instructed the people attending the prayer meeting to join the 50 candidates upstairs in the church. This group of candidates was the largest ever enrolled at St Paul's for the series ... The prayers and the Singers, led by John Smith, all trooped upstairs into the church. The candidates with their group leaders sat on one side of the church and the visitors from the prayer meeting placed themselves on the other side ... When it came to the laying on of hands the two people who were doing it, Father David and the Rev John Childers, started with the candidates in the front row. While they were laying on hands Father David asked everybody else to sing accompanied by John Smith on the guitar ... We had only sung about two verses of a particular song when it seemed that the Spirit of the Lord came upon us all and we started singing in the Spirit.¹² The harmony was simply beautiful. After about 10 minutes John Smith strummed a few notes on the guitar and I felt he was trying to bring us back to the words again. But. no, we just carried on singing in the Spirit. People started to prophesy in harmony¹³ and sing in tongues and interpretations of both were offered. The experience continued for over 40 minutes ... On that night we sang in the Spirit for the longest

time ever at St Paul's ... this evening was extraordinary because the laying on of hands on the candidates seemed hardly necessary. The Spirit of the Lord came upon nearly every candidate, and they just automatically appeared to come into baptism of the Spirit.'¹⁴

Of one such ministry occasion parishioner Barbara Thatcher recalls, 'It was good to see the power being released, and people came from elsewhere including students from the Baptist Seminary. We had the Baptist students dancing in the Spirit up in the sanctuary on the Holy Spirit night!'¹⁵

Church Army Evangelist Peter Lloyd, who joined the staff at St Paul's in 1975, recalls his first experience of the Seminars: 'When a Life in the Spirit Seminar was being held David [Balfour] asked me if I could be possibly involved and I said, 'Yes, gladly' and I led a group and after the first or second week he said 'Look, Pete, there's a whole bunch of people who have been through the Seminars. I wonder if you could take the teaching with them downstairs while the teaching's going on?' I had no problem with that at all. It came to the fifth night and David invited me over to his office and said 'I'd like you to join in with the prayer ministry.' So I said, 'Well, David, hold a sec, I have not spoken in tongues. I don't know of the experience. I will gladly pray but ... And he said, 'That's fine,' and we chatted for a bit more and I said, 'Okay. I now know what I'm not doing. What DO I do?' And he said, 'Well, Peter, I suggest you just come up and join in with the rest of us ... and just say to the Lord 'Whatever you've got for me tonight. I'm willing to receive.' I can actually take you to the pillar in St Paul's by which I was kneeling when I received a very quiet gift of tongues and at the end of the night, I went out to see David Balfour and tell him what happened and as I walked to him he said 'Don't say a word! It's written all over your face. You are like the cat that has got all the cream!'¹⁶

Seminars continued at St Paul's for many years

and people from St Paul's supplied leaders and speakers for Seminars at other places.

Another prompt start was at St Martin's Mount Roskill where the Rev Brian Jenkins was vicar and Bill Subritzky¹⁷ was a vestry-member and Synodsmen. Brian recalls: 'Bill was on our local vestry, and he talked to them (about the Seminars) and we decided we would do a trial run with the Vestry - they were the guinea-pigs and they all decided as a vestry that they would do it. It wasn't that they were drawn to do it, but that they would experiment with it by doing it. And Kevin Hall who was a young man was down to lead us in this . . . and it was made a bit wider - we were involved with the Anglican-Methodist church of Lynfield, whose Minister was Canon Maunga Cameron, a wonderful man who was the Bishop's liaison at that stage for the charismatic renewal, and we went through this and the vestry heard all this teaching which gave them the scripture in a solid, logical sort of section by section. The great thing was the booklet that they had which had just a short passage of scripture for each day and a commentary and came the night for praying for everybody and we dutifully prayed for everybody - we didn't quite know what we were doing ... We used it to introduce them to that and so we got involved in taking them all over the city and over the country and they were a wonderful tool, I felt, a great blessing, in the teaching they gave. It was the first time, I think, that Anglicans in any numbers had received some sort of logical presentation of the Gospel and it was done in a way that it wasn't just an intellectual exercise, it was a whole being - you were involved, and you expected God to act.'¹⁸

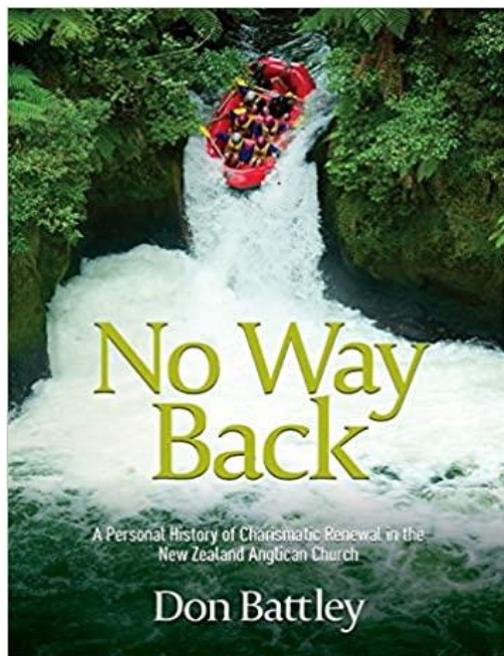
Brian cannot recall how often the Seminars were presented at St Martin's because he and others St Martin's leaders were being invited all over the place to speak at them, including at Kerikeri, Helensville and even Wanganui.

It is less clear when the Seminars commenced at

St Margaret's Hillsborough but it would have been 1973 or 1974. Hugh Cromwell, one of the Rev Herbert Boniface's elders, recalls them as

being 'very widespread and well attended.'¹⁹ John Boniface says just that 'We did a lot of Life in the Spirit Seminars.'²⁰

***No Way Back:
a Personal History of the Charismatic Renewal
in the New Zealand Anglican Church***



Title: *No Way Back: A Personal History of the Charismatic Renewal in the New Zealand Anglican Church*

Author: Don Battley

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No Way Back is the heartfelt story of an Anglican priest deeply impacted by the charismatic movement as it swept through New Zealand in the late twentieth century. Having lived through all the stages of the movement, Don Battley takes the reader inside the personal experiences of those enfolded in the excitement of a vibrant faith and shows how they negotiated the tensions that arose within established Anglican culture. It is a story of faith and enterprise; of young leaders seeking to renew their church and restore confident Christianity in a time of uncertainty; and of the hope that those leaders now hand on to a new generation. This intimate memoir expresses the confidence that, in the face of opposition and changing times, God will never abandon the Church.

Review

'Don Battley has written a compelling story of his life and ministry ... yet this is not the story of just one person's life and commitments ... He has an eye for a clear narrative, and this book will be an invaluable starting point, that carefully conveys the story of a movement vastly greater in impact than some may care to acknowledge. Above all the story seems hopeful and optimistic to the end.'

From the foreword by Emeritus Professor Peter Lineham (Massey University)

Endnotes

¹ Brian Jenkins recalls that Bill and Pat Subritzky met Ray and Elaine on their arrival at Auckland Airport and brought them to Brian and Trish Jenkin's vicarage for breakfast before they flew on to Wellington. This means that the news about the *Life in the Spirit Seminars* arrived in Auckland at that time in 1972. Interview, Brian Jenkins, 5 November 2010, p. 4.

² Participants included Allen Neil, Cecil Marshall and Keven Hall. Interview, R Muller, p.1.

³ Christian Advance Ministries (CAM) was an interdenominational charismatic renewal agency, led mainly by Anglicans, which sought to promote renewal in the historic churches. It ran large Summer Schools in both islands, brought speakers throughout the country and its National Directors conducted

renewal missions.

⁴ 'The Summer Schools provided an opportunity from the historic church perspective of the things that relate to the Spirit in the charismatic renewal. Prior to that the only choice that main-line church people could have, was to go to the Conventions at New Year with Derek Prince and other Pentecostal teachers held in Tauranga which was from a helpful - but not always helpful - Pentecostal theology standpoint. So, this was to provide something within the mainline churches, so it was an amazing turning point really for many, many people (and) it introduced them to the tool (*LISS*).' Muller Transcript, p. 2.

⁵ Telephone Interview, Terry Way, 14 September 2010.

⁶ N.F.H. Merritt, *'To God be the Glory: the first 10.5 years of charismatic renewal in St Pauls'*, St Paul's Outreach Trust, Auckland, NZ, 1981

⁷ Merritt, pp. 82-3. Merritt records the strong impact of the first Christian Advance Ministries' Summer School at Massey on St Paul's people. 'The Summer Conference aroused much interest in St Pauls, and I and about fifty others enthusiastically departed for Palmerston North.'

⁸ Merritt, p. 85.

⁹ Although an accredited Assembly of God pastor at the time, John Childers held a staff position at St Paul's Anglican church for some years. This is indicative of the cross-denominational nature of the early years of the renewal.

¹⁰ Merritt, pp. 85-6

¹¹ Merritt, p. 93.

¹² By 'singing in the Spirit' is meant people singing simultaneously in tongues.

¹³ By this he means people sang prophecies in English, or as interpretations of the sung tongues.

¹⁴ Merritt, pp. 114-5.

¹⁵ Interview, Barbara Thatcher, 25 August 2010, p. 2.

¹⁶ Interview, Rev Sister Lorraine Lloyd (C.A.) and Capt Peter Lloyd (C.A.), 21 May 2010, p. 3

¹⁷ In the 1960s Bill Subritzky was a lawyer and a committed Anglican who was Chairman of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee and a Synod member. His renewal in the Spirit led him progressively into a ministry of evangelism and healing that he has exercised for many years.

¹⁸ Interview, Brian Jenkins, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁹ Interview, Hugh Cromwell, 17 February 2011, p. 2.

²⁰ Interview, Rev John Boniface, 24 July 2008, p.8.