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Renewal through Conversation

SEEKING RENEWAL

Renewal is something desired by many people, communities, and nations. It is the seeking of practices that will regenerate, reinvigorate, and make new individuals, groups, and areas where things have become run down.¹ Thus we talk about personal renewal, urban renewal, political renewal, and community renewal. It is the basic awareness that things are not as they should be and there is a lament as to how people and communities are living and the way society is headed. What is needed is fresh vision and action to repair the problems and make things new. Renewal thus describes a movement from lament to newness via vision and action. This movement is often spoken of as a journey from death to life, from darkness to light, and from despair to hope. Renewal is rooted in the past, appreciating that there have been many good things to celebrate; it is acted upon in the present in times of challenge; and it points ahead to a fresh future in which things are to be different. This is the very general understanding of renewal that many in the world would sign up to be part of, but in the present work we are particularly interested in *spiritual renewal* within the Christian tradition. This overlaps with wider understandings of renewal as “spiritual” is taken to correspond to the way in which Christian faith relates to the whole of life in this world: personal, communal, national, and political. Yet at the same time there is an inevitable focus on particular faith practices that encourage a spiritual approach to the whole of life. In Christian history we can see that where

1. Just consider dictionary definitions and the wikipedia entries.

faith has reached a low ebb and practices seem dull, there arise movements of renewal that promise fresh hope. Movements of Christian renewal are rooted in the Scriptures and history, encourage faith practices in the present, and engender an attitude of hope for the future. They follow patterns of death and resurrection in as much as they mirror the central narrative of Jesus that shapes Christian faith. They are also characterized by an emphasis on the work of God in renewal rather than primarily relying on increased human effort. Sometimes this is spoken of in terms of *revival*, emphasizing the sense of newness and of God's initiative, although the meaning of the terms overlaps. In either case, Christian renewal follows the pattern of Jesus and is energized by the work of the Holy Spirit of God, who is seen as the one who sustains and renews the whole of creation.

Within this still broad understanding of renewal this book seeks to engage with the nature of charismatic renewal movements in the worldwide church that have arisen since the 1960s. These are often seen alongside the Pentecostal movement in their emphasis on the present work of the Holy Spirit to bring new life into struggling churches. These movements are often traced to the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906 and have resulted in over five hundred million people being affected.² Yet this is to simplify the historical reality which is characterized by many different movements, each with different roots, contexts, beliefs, and character. Despite the differences there appears a shared emphasis on the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit that remake faith anew for the world today. In this, the term "renewal" has come to the fore as a way of describing these disparate movements. Research by the Pew Foundation has since 2010 used the term "renewalist" to describe movements often known as Pentecostal, charismatic, or neo-charismatic.³ Within world Christianity, movements characterized by renewal continue to have a huge impact on its development and also on the renewal of the wider world. This is partly due to their combining personal transformation with the desire to share the good news of Jesus and his empowering Spirit "to the ends of the earth."⁴ Christian faith is seen as a way to bring goodness into the world and overcome all that gets in the way of life, justice and peace.

Against this positive backdrop it may be surprising to suggest that not all is well with renewal. Yes, there is much that testifies to the power of renewal to transform individuals, communities, and wider society.⁵ Yet

2. Anderson, *Pentecostalism*, 1,39.

3. Johnson and Crossing, "Christianity 2013." These are often termed "pentecostal" (small "P") in scholarship including my own, Andy Lord, *Network Church*, 4–10. Through this book I use pentecostal and renewalist interchangeably.

4. Anderson, *To the Ends*, 1.

5. Many such examples are brought together in Miller and Yamamori, *Global*

if we focus in on particular histories of renewal then we see many setbacks and examples of decline as well as examples of things made new. Congregations that were transformed have tried to keep the forms of worship that renewed them yet seem to have lost the energy of the Spirit of God. Individuals delivered from addictions have found themselves slipping back into unhealthy patterns of life. Spontaneous movements of life have established structures and leadership that begin to seem more about the institution than the spiritual life that started it. Such patterns of decline have motivated one international leader in charismatic renewal to state that “Renewal has reached a crisis—and we have to choose how we react.”⁶ This should not surprise us as renewal presupposes that things will decline towards eventual death unless fresh life comes. Renewal thus describes the ongoing process of seeking God for the life that overcomes decline. The temptation is for present renewal to be sought using the same form and practices used in the past. Whilst inspired by the past, renewal is always about life in the present context. The Holy Spirit is sought for the church and world of today rather than for how things used to be. I am suggesting that in many places renewal has declined in its impact and hence fresh renewal is required. This is not a search after perfection but rather a seeking of new life from God to flow into the always mixed lives of people today. Renewal moves things forward in the direction of life and yet is always incomplete: renewal movements contain the glory and the shame that Peter Hocken notes in relation to pentecostalism.⁷ To seek renewal is to seek fresh life that offers transformation and hope despite the failures.

If such renewal is worth seeking then the question is: how? As I have suggested, it is not simply through trying to keep past patterns and structures, to repeat specific forms of prayer, to sing certain songs, to hold to particular understandings of Scripture, to exalt certain leaders or to get angry towards those who don't seem renewed. At the heart of renewal is the surprise of the Holy Spirit.⁸ As Christians, we seek renewal by seeking the Holy Spirit and letting ourselves be surprised by God. In other words, to seek renewal is to be open before God to what is different. More particularly, it is about being open in a personal way to God and to others who have encountered God in fresh ways. Renewal is personal and yet communal—encountering the Spirit is individual and also connects people. This is the truth at the heart of renewal movements and is true to the way the Spirit is presented in the

Pentecostalism.

6. Brewin, *Transforming Renewal*.

7. Hocken, *Glory and the Shame*.

8. *Ibid.*, 16–22.

New Testament.⁹ I want here to suggest that renewal is a work of the Holy Spirit in humanity that brings fresh life. This life is sought by individuals and this seeking leads to an embrace of those who are different and encourages and challenges faith in new directions. So renewal is about people and conversations, about engaging with those who are different, within the aim of letting God's life-giving Holy Spirit breathe afresh on us. This book seeks to reflect on the nature of renewal through such a conversation between different people and propose a fresh understanding (theology) of renewal for the future. Such is our aim, but first we need to step back and consider how this approach sits with some of the renewalist traditions.

CONVERSATIONS FOR RENEWAL

At first sight this approach to renewal through conversations may seem different and not quite as dramatic as some would like. Some would argue that it is primarily powerful encounters with God that stimulate renewal. Yet considering Pentecostalism we can see behind the dramatic were meetings between different people seeking deeply a fresh work of God. The relationship between William Seymour and Charles Parham in the founding of Pentecostalism has been long debated—does the movement owe more to the African American pastor or the white teacher?¹⁰ Yet what is not questioned is the importance of Seymour's listening to the message of Parham and wrestling with its difference from what he had believed until he was able to minister alongside him.¹¹ This did not imply they agreed in their theology, but rather that their thinking and ministering together helped set the scene for the Pentecostal revival at Azusa Street. Seymour's relationship with Parham and with others such as Lucy Farrow, Edward Lee, and Frank Bartleman, helped shape the movement as they sought the Spirit together. It is the personal wrestling and encounter that comes to the fore again and again in the early years of this renewal movement. The early journal of Azusa Street, *Apostolic Faith*, recounts many testimonies shared in order that others might think, wrestle and discover the Holy Spirit afresh themselves. Conversations through personal meetings, teaching, writings, and testimony stimulated a renewal that certainly included the dramatic, but did not consist of the dramatic alone.

9. Consider, for example the twin themes of the communal (church) and the personal in Yves Congar's understanding of the Holy Spirit. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, a distinction noted by Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 14–15.

10. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 18–24.

11. Robeck, *Azusa Street*, 45–50.

In a similar way the charismatic movement grew as people shared, learned, and questioned together in seeking a fresh experience of the Holy Spirit. Often the story is told through the lives of particular leaders, but the story can be also told through the diverse relationships between people who were different and yet sought the Holy Spirit, as in Hocken's retelling.¹² In this we meet Alexander Boddy, Charles Clarke, Gordon Ross, Philip Smith, John Collins, and others linked by a network of relationships. Boddy was a key Anglican leader in early Pentecostalism in the UK and brought people from different traditions together at annual conferences.¹³ Much later in the last century Smith led charismatic prayer meetings which then developed under Collins, part of a network of prayer that brought people together in seeking God.¹⁴ People of different church traditions were brought together in prayer and reflection. The significant link person between the Pentecostal and charismatic movements was David du Plessis, a South African Assemblies of God (A/G) minister who became an elder statesman to the charismatic movement.¹⁵ For du Plessis it was the freedom of the Holy Spirit to encourage new ways of faith that was central and enabled him to cross different theological traditions. He even met with the Pope in 1976, although this caused problems for many Pentecostals and he was for a time expelled from the A/G. The charismatic movement was notable for its ecumenical impulse bridging some of the divides between Protestants and Roman Catholics.¹⁶ There is a form of grassroots ecumenism that naturally arose within the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, and renewal was birthed in the context of a joint seeking of the Holy Spirit in prayer, meeting together across ecclesial traditions, and fresh engagement with the Scriptures.¹⁷

Renewal and ecumenical practice are, I suggest, therefore linked. Vital to the seeking fresh life from God in our midst is the engagement with those who differ from us and yet encourage us in a deeper seeking of the Spirit. This is not to say that most renewalists are in favor of such a vision of encountering the Spirit through ecumenical engagement. Indeed, many favor a more exclusive approach to understanding the work of the Spirit in renewal. Rather it is to suggest that a wider approach is consonant with the

12. Hocken, *Streams of Renewal*.

13. Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy*.

14. Hocken, *Streams of Renewal*, 91–96.

15. *Ibid.*, 44–49; Ziefle, *David Du Plessis*.

16. For Hocken this is the distinctive of the charismatic movement, which perhaps overstates the evidence yet recognizes this vital aspect of the movement.

17. On the grassroots nature of charismatic renewal see Au, *Grassroots Unity*.

tradition and worthy of further exploration. It is also an approach favored in some contemporary pentecostal scholarship and training. For example, the Center for Renewal Studies at Regent University seeks to study and practice renewal by way of conversations across theological traditions and disciplines, as well as across cultural divides.¹⁸ Here there is a drawing together of insights, of Spirit inspirations, in order to promote the renewal and mission of the church that transforms the world. This book seeks to explore the theme of renewal from within the charismatic tradition by means of engaging with someone from outside the tradition who also sought renewal. Before moving on to this we need to pause and reflect on the nature of the ecumenical movement which has been touched on here and which can also be seen as a movement of renewal.

ECUMENICAL RENEWAL

The twentieth-century ecumenical movement developed out of the earlier missionary movement, notably the 1910 World Missionary Conference. To be ecumenical was, at least up until the 1950s, to be involved in “the whole task of the whole church to bring the gospel to the whole world.”¹⁹ For the “whole church” to witness to the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, there was seen a need to bring existing churches together into forms of visible unity. The World Council of Churches (WCC) was established in 1948 with this desire for visible unity and gospel mission, a desire that echoes those found in the early ecumenical councils of the world church. The desire for mission and unity are inter-twined, although there have been debates over the need to keep mission as the overall aim rather than unity.²⁰ There is a temptation to reduce mission to unity which blunts the churches witness and ministry in the world. Recent decades have seen the WCC develop a greater trinitarian emphasis in understanding mission, a desire to engage with the question of God’s desires for the entire human community and an encouragement to expand participation in the movement, particularly amongst pentecostal churches.

The ecumenical movement was seen to have been given a boost by Vatican II which encouraged Roman Catholic engagement, yet progress since has often been slow and expectations chastened. There continue to be

18. <http://www.regent.edu/acad/schdiv/renewalstudies/about.cfm>
[accessed 17 June 2013]

19. A classic definition, written by the WCC central committee in 1951, Kinnamon, “Assessing,” 53.

20. For example, Skreslet, “Empty Basket.”

structural divisions despite efforts to bring about visible unity. The failure of the unity schemes between the Church of England and the Methodist church in England, and the disappointment with Roman Catholic judgment on Anglican-Roman Catholic (ARCIC) dialogues have been notable setbacks. Some question whether the movement has run out of steam and struggling to change and engage with the churches now growing most in the world. The WCC was formed largely out of the Western missionary movement and now faces a very different reality of church and mission in the world. Its structures are not always seen as suitable for the flexible network realities of life today that do not favor centralized initiatives. There have been different calls for a renewal of the movement and some have suggested that the movement needs to keep in focus its roots in the desires for a renewal of the church.²¹

Given the enthusiasm of ecumenical work and yet the disappointing setbacks it is natural that some are suggesting that we simply accept a “reconciled diversity” within the church worldwide. Yet this would be to give up on the ecumenical heart that seeks unity in order that the mission of the church is better enabled. To say that churches are different and can live with each other is to neglect the fact that we proclaim a love from God that brings differing people together and changes them in the process. In mission we can only speak of God’s love if it is clearly transforming those of us who seek to follow Christ, overcoming our differences. Hence a number of ways of revisioning the ecumenical movement have developed. One way forward is that of “spiritual ecumenism,” which is rooted in the work of the triune God and requires a continual conversion, a change of heart under the influence of the Holy Spirit.²² This “Spirit-driven movement of the heart” promises a way of continued change through encounter with those different to ourselves.²³ It sees unity as a gift of God that is sought in prayer and through a painful awareness of our divisions and willingness to seek reconciliation. Here is a humble seeking of unity that sees results in changed churches and lives in the hope of visible unity between churches, even if it is not going to be as immediate as previously thought.

One approach to such spiritual ecumenism that has been developed is “receptive ecumenism.” The term “reception” as an ecumenical theme dates back to the 1970s as a way to describe the process by which a church

21. Kinnamon and Cope, *Ecumenical Movement*, 1–2.

22. Kasper, *Handbook*.

23. This description is from Murray, “Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning,” 16.

receives the results of ecumenical encounters.²⁴ It assumes that we belong to a particular church tradition and that encounters with those of other traditions changes the perception of our own tradition. Encounter leads to change and modifications of our starting tradition. Ecumenism is not simply about a melting pot in which church identity is lost, but rather a giving and receiving of gifts that naturally lead to changed identities as we realize our incompleteness. Hence the key question of receptive ecumenism is: “What, in any given situation, can one’s own tradition appropriately learn with integrity from other traditions?”²⁵ There is here a call to keep on seeking and learning through the gifts offered by others, in order that our churches may be transformed in the direction of “reconciled diversity with structural unity.” Thus we are not simply talking about ecumenical *dialogue* or *conversations* but rather about how the results of these transform the way we live in the present in hope of future unity. This requires both a critical and constructive engagement between traditions that results in proposals for transformed ways forward. This transformation is a work of the Spirit that reflects the Spirit’s work at Pentecost in opening us up to others within the diverse communion of the church around the world.²⁶

Receptive ecumenism therefore requires us to clarify aspects of our own tradition, to engage with particular people from other traditions, and within the wider thinking of our tradition consider how that tradition might be transformed. This is all for the sake of God’s mission and the importance of unity within this. Already the resonances between this approach and the informal ecumenism we have noted in renewal traditions should be obvious. This approach is particularly appropriate for renewalist ecumenism because of its emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in transformation, its call to conversion, its concern for practical living and its eschatological vision. Receptive ecumenism can be understood in terms of lives lived in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. In particular, the transformations that come by the Spirit as we are drawn to other people who differ from us in their experience and knowledge of God in Christ. The Spirit opens us up to receive truth from others, a truth that deeply challenges some of our views and living, forcing a conversion of the heart and mind. Each step of conversion moves us towards the coming kingdom of God in which all peoples come together in worship of Christ in a place of justice and peace. This is a personal transformation that carries with it God’s heart of mission for a transformed world, one in which the church is brought into unity

24. Murray, *Receptive Ecumenism*, 89.

25. Murray, “Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning,” 12.

26. Murray, *Receptive Ecumenism*, 3–4.

for the sake of the whole of creation. Such an understanding of receptive ecumenism takes it beyond its roots in the Roman Catholic tradition and the initial work done largely in regard to this tradition.²⁷ There is a Catholic desire for ecumenical learning that has recently been reaffirmed by Pope Francis, yet our concern here is to engage from a renewalist perspective.²⁸ I am thus suggesting a particular understanding of receptive ecumenism that seeks to get beyond what Hocken speaks of as “one of the deepest divides between Christians—between the Evangelical-Pentecostal-Revivalistic on the one side and the Catholic-liturgical-sacramental-ecclesial on the other.”²⁹ Receptive ecumenism can be understood as an “ecumenism of the Holy Spirit” that seeks to span the divides that continue between churches and traditions.³⁰

At a time when the ecumenical movement is engaging more with pentecostalism such a vision of receptive ecumenism has also much to contribute to the next stage of pentecostal ecumenical engagement. As noted above, pentecostalism has always had an ambivalent attitude to ecumenical involvement, sometimes positive and sometimes harshly negative. It has been said that pentecostalism is both inherently ecumenical whilst seeking to stand for a truth that divides.³¹ For our purposes it is important to trace the positive pentecostal developments: Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen suggests five phases in pentecostal ecumenism: (1) an initial ecumenical dream of uniting Christians; (2) a turn to a more exclusivist position due to the hostility of others; (3) a redefining of unity as an invisible spiritual unity rooted in God’s work and not ours; (4) a cautious openness to the ecumenical movement; and (5) the establishment of relationships and dialogues with Roman Catholics and others.³² Initial ecumenical involvement and reality came as part of the shared experience of Spirit baptism that transcended traditions and as differences of race were overcome in worship. Wider ecumenical involvement developed since the 1950s due in part to prophetic guidance by the Spirit as with Du Plessis, who we considered above. More formal dialogues over the last forty years have brought greater understanding between pentecostals and other traditions and it is currently a time of review, considering how to move forward into the next phase of pentecostal en-

27. Ibid.

28. See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 246.

29. Hocken, “Response.”

30. On this see Hocken, *Pentecost and Parousia*, 91, although I would not want to overplay the nature of the divide.

31. Jacobsen, “Ambivalent Ecumenical Impulse.”

32. Kärkkäinen, *Toward*, 40.

agement with the wider church.³³ A vital concern for Pentecostals hesitant about ecumenical engagement is the fear of a loss of Pentecostal identity.³⁴ Such tensions are not peculiar to Pentecostals and illustrate the need for both a secure identity and openness to change within ecumenism. It is such a transformation of identity through the impulse of the Spirit that receptive ecumenism seeks to model.

In seeking the next step in pentecostal ecumenism it will be important to identify methods that both value identity and yet are committed to transformation through encounters with others. As renewal has come through different forms of shared encounters in the Spirit so we should expect such methods to be about both personal and divine encounters that transform.³⁵ For pentecostals, it is the Spirit above all who draws people to God and to others. Hence it has been said that when “the Spirit renews the church, the vision for ecumenical unity follows.”³⁶ It is an encounter after the model of Pentecost in which there is unity in plurality, a pouring out of the same Spirit on people of every language and nation.³⁷ It is a heart-work of God by the Spirit that draws people together in unity around Christ. It is the mission work of God who empowers us by the Spirit to share the good news of Jesus with all people that they might share in the same blessings. Pentecostal ecumenism is thus a Spirit inspired and importantly a bottom-up grassroots reality which draws people forwards. The need for a focus on such ecumenism is increasingly recognized.³⁸ Maybe the next phase of the ecumenical movement will be focus on ensuring an “ecumenical reality,” a lived ecumenism rather than a simple sharing of views, a received ecumenism that makes a difference in the world, a people-centered ecumenism that engages in a personal way, a local ecumenism rooted in community. These are not new and reflect something of the “ecumenical virtue” seen in the life of Yves Congar, yet reworked for pentecostals around the experience of the Spirit.³⁹ In this context the approach of receptive ecumenism has much to offer.

Ecumenism is itself always in need of renewal and such phases of renewal can be seen through the history of both the WCC and pentecostal ecumenism. The model of receptive ecumenism seems to have much

33. Vondey, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity*; Vondey, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity*, Vol. 2.

34. This is helpfully explored in the tensions between Du Plessis and the A/G in Ziefle, *David Du Plessis*.

35. McClung Jr., “Try.”

36. Au, *Grassroots Unity*, 1.

37. Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, 171–73.

38. Kärkkäinen, *Toward*, 51.

39. Bacik, *Contemporary Theologians*, 42.

to offer as a way forward that resonates both with WCC and pentecostal concerns. This book seeks to employ this model as it addresses the nature of renewal itself.

CHARISMATIC RECEPTIVE ECUMENISM

We are seeking to utilize the method of receptive ecumenism from the starting tradition of the charismatic renewal movement.⁴⁰ Anglican leaders were particularly significant in the early years, with Dennis Bennett in the USA and Michael Harper in the UK being key to the spread of the movement across countries and denominations. In the UK, Harper established the Fountain Trust that held five international conferences from 1971 to 1979 as well as many local conferences. As Connie Au has demonstrated, these conferences encouraged grassroots ecumenism through a shared experience of the charisms of the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ Yet as the movement grew so it spread and became more diverse and it is difficult to summarize the charismatic tradition today, even if we limit it to one nation.⁴² Indeed, some would suggest that the charismatic movement is not a *tradition* because Christian traditions need clearer boundaries within a denomination, as opposed to *movements*, which span traditions.⁴³ This is a debate over language and reflects changing understandings of institutions and workings of the Spirit. It might be helpful here to clarify that by the charismatic tradition I am thinking in terms of a tradition of Christian spirituality (life in the Spirit) that spans institutions. This is the tradition that has stressed encounters with the Holy Spirit that are “free, spontaneous, dynamic, transformative and should be an ongoing experiential reality within the purposes of God.”⁴⁴ It is shared between Pentecostals and charismatics as well as being characteristic of other groups through Christian history. Christians are shaped by a number of traditions, such as the Anglican and charismatic in this particular case, and each can be renewed through involvement in the other. Renewal is thus ecclesial in that it grows within and transforms church traditions, yet is also

40. Hocken, “Charismatic Movement.”

41. Au, *Grassroots Unity*.

42. For the UK, earlier work in this regard includes Hocken, *Streams of Renewal*; Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*.

43. This point was made to me by Peter Hocken in response to a presentation of an earlier draft of the present chapter.

44. Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit*, 25.

global in that it grows only through wider engagements and affects traditions across existing church divides.⁴⁵

To focus our study we need to choose a significant element within the charismatic tradition in order to explore the nature of renewal. Significance is often rightly given to pivotal moments in a tradition when new understandings become clear and help define the way things then proceed. These moments are often linked to particular leaders who shape ideas and practices that are adopted by others. Receptive ecumenism also encourages such a personal engagement with the tradition: to consider not just an abstract tradition but a personally embodied tradition that is seen in times of transformation. For this purpose the life and thinking of David Watson provides an appropriate representative of the charismatic renewal tradition to study. Watson was involved in the early charismatic movement in the UK during the 1960s and knew Harper. He became a leader in the movement and helped introduce John Wimber to the UK, whose influence was substantial across the strands of the charismatic movement. Harper saw Watson as someone who did more for ecumenism in the UK than almost anyone else of the time.⁴⁶ Watson therefore represents a pivotal person within the tradition who is important to study for this reason. Other leaders could have been chosen, such as Michael Harper (who came before Watson), Tom Smail (who brought greater theological reflection), or David Pytches (who came after Watson and established more significant structures for ongoing renewal). These would certainly benefit from further study, but Watson brought together evangelism, congregational renewal, and ecumenical involvement in thoughtful ways that are more relevant and pivotal for the present study. Watson stands within the present author's Anglican charismatic tradition, but is representative of a charismatic movement that is wider than just one ecclesial tradition.

Given the starting charismatic tradition represented by Watson, receptive ecumenism would then ask of us which other tradition should be engaged with so as to enrich this tradition. Key to Watson's own ecumenical impulse was his engagement with Roman Catholics at one of the Fountain Trust conferences mentioned earlier.⁴⁷ He moved from a very negative view of the Roman Catholic tradition to one characterized by an attitude of love

45. Admittedly, this is a more Protestant view of *tradition*, although one that values the ongoing engagement with Scripture and apostolic authority within ecclesial realities. A helpful way forward here is that suggested by the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues, http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/ecumenical/dialogues/catholic/arcic/docs/gift_of_authority.cfm [accessed 17 March 2014].

46. Edward England, *David Watson*, 57–58.

47. Watson, *You Are My God*, 97–106.

and listening as the Spirit guided him. Although Watson did not engage deeply with Roman Catholic tradition, it seems appropriate to see how the charismatic renewal represented by Watson can be enriched through such an engagement. It would be profitable to consider here the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and one of the leaders in this movement such as Cardinal Suenens, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa or Fr. Peter Hocken. However, this would limit the study to one undertaken within the charismatic tradition rather than across traditions. Hence, it is preferable to seek a personal engagement with another tradition of renewal, and Thomas Merton is an appropriate conversation partner. Merton is seen by many as key to monastic renewal in the twentieth century and is a pivotal person within this different tradition of renewal. He is often referred to in terms of spirituality and yet wrote on a wide range of topics and in different styles. Merton's engagement with authors across traditions enriched his thinking and he is appreciated across the Christian traditions. Although the work of the Holy Spirit is not often seen as central to Merton, it does underlie his transformative view of Christian life within the world.⁴⁸ We are thus exploring the work of the Holy Spirit in renewal through this conversation between people in different traditions of renewal. So, in terms of receptive ecumenism the question we are asking is: "*What can the charismatic tradition, represented by Watson, appropriately learn about renewal with integrity from the Roman Catholic tradition, represented by Merton?*"

The answer to this question will be explored through a consideration of different aspects of renewal, with the aim of identifying continuing challenges to the charismatic tradition. These will be challenges that point to a transformation of understanding and practice and are, in effect, ways into seeking the renewal of this renewal tradition. After this initial chapter which sets the scene, further chapters in this book will consider different aspects of renewal. For each aspect we will outline the understanding within the charismatic tradition represented by the life and thinking of Watson. This will then be brought into conversation with the understanding of Merton to consider what might be learnt. Then these will be brought into dialogue with the wider charismatic traditions as represented by pentecostal/renewalist scholarship. The question here is how these traditions might be transformed through our particular receptive ecumenical engagement. In this we are effectively linking the personal challenge that comes to the fore with the two leaders considered with the challenge to the wider church and traditions of which they were a part. These challenges are then used to outline a constructive proposal for a transformed understanding of renewal. There are

48. On this see my wider argument in Andy Lord, "Quest."

many ways this could be done and the choice here is to use the challenges to develop an understanding of renewal through engagement with the text of John's Gospel. This is a gospel that naturally resonates with the charismatic movement's emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, yet contrasts with the usual focus on Luke-Acts. The aim is to be suggestive of transformed ways of renewal rather than giving an exhaustive proposal. In the conclusion a summary of the things learnt is presented alongside constructive ideas for a pneumatologically based renewal theology and future directions in Roman Catholic and ecumenical engagement. This study seeks to contribute to the literature on receptive ecumenism extending it into areas of renewal studies, to extend charismatic and pentecostal scholarship in the direction of a different approach to ecumenism, and to suggest how further renewal theologies might be developed.

LIVES OF WATSON AND MERTON

It is important here to give some details of the lives of Watson and Merton to give a broad background for a consideration of their thinking on renewal. These will be developed through the coming chapters, but a broad understanding is helpful at the outset. Surprisingly little has been written on Watson, although there is an ever growing literature on Merton.⁴⁹ Watson was born in 1933 and despite a religious upbringing he arrived at Cambridge University as a cynical unbeliever, a humanist, whose two years in the army convinced him of the futility of Christian faith. He was then surprised by the integrity of a Christian invited to speak at an undergraduate tea-party. The reality of faith was attractive to Watson as was the gospel of Jesus, and in due course he knelt to give his life to Jesus. His early faith was nurtured by David Sheppard, then a cricket hero who was later to become bishop of Liverpool. Watson developed a combination of Christian learning and service as a leader in the 'Bash' camps, Christian holiday camps for young men. He then went on to be ordained in the Church of England and serve amongst the dockyard workers of Gillingham and then amongst the students of Cambridge. In Cambridge Watson became unexpectedly depressed

49. On Watson there is one biography, Saunders and Sansom, *David Watson*, a study of important themes, Porter, *David Watson* and a reflection by friends. Edward England, *David Watson*. For Merton there are a variety of approaches to his life with significant books being: Mott, *Seven Mountains*; Lawrence S. Cunningham, *Thomas Merton*; Shannon, *Silent Lamp*; Padovano, *Human Journey*. Watson wrote two books of autobiography, Watson, *You Are My God*; Watson, *Fear No Evil*. Merton wrote his famous biography of his early faith, Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* and many journals written throughout his life.

and church life seemed dull. This led to a fresh seeking of God's Spirit in the context of an awareness of charismatic renewal and prayer for revival.

Watson's experience of the filling of the Spirit enabled him to face confidently the task of then leading St. Cuthbert's church in York in 1965. This was a church that had at most a dozen people attending and which was due to close within a year. Watson committed himself to pastoral work, teaching, prayer, and evangelism. Eight years later the congregation had outgrown the building and moved into St. Michael le Belfrey in York. Watson had been known as an evangelist before his experience of renewal, having led university missions across the country. This commitment to sharing Jesus continued if shaped more by the development of a church community that witnessed in creative ways. Watson developed a team of creative artists, pioneered communal living in extended households, started a social outreach project, and shared his wisdom with others across the world through Renewal weeks based at St. Michael's. Tensions arose over the leadership of the church, particularly over women's ministry. This was particularly painful for Watson given that his wife, Anne, had prophetic leadership gifts. Eventually some broke away from the church to set up an alternative fellowship. Despite this Watson continued to be known for his commitment to reconciliation across denominational divides, particularly through links in Northern Ireland. He later stepped back from overall leadership of St. Michael's and spent time travelling in mission across the world as well as in York.

Given the travelling it was perhaps inevitable that Watson would move away from York, and London provided a good base for his growing ministry. It was a step of faith to leave York, and as the wider church provided no financial support, a Trust was set up to raise funds and oversee things. Watson was able to spend more time writing and his wide experience was translated into handbooks on discipleship, evangelism, and the nature of the church. Six months into the time in London he was diagnosed with cancer and needed an operation. He had met John Wimber in the US a couple of years earlier and they became firm friends. Wimber came and prayed for Watson's healing. Despite a continued faith in healing prayer Watson was not healed and died in 1984.

Merton's life overlapped with that of Watson as he lived from 1915 to 1968, although they didn't meet. Merton was born in France to parents from New Zealand and America who were both artists. After his mother died, during the 1920s, Merton travelled with his father to Bermuda and around Europe attending schools in France and England. He attended Cambridge University for two years, being drawn more to drink and women than study. After a child was born and legal action undertaken, Merton had to leave and then enrolled at Columbia University in Manhattan. It was here that he

discovered Catholicism. The teaching and friendship of Dan Walsh alongside research on William Blake were important in this spiritual journey as was his visit to the Friendship House founded by Catherine de Hueck, famous for its work in Catholic social outreach. After a long night out at a jazz club, Merton told his friends of his desire to become a priest. After exploring a number of options Merton entered the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1941 to be accepted into the Trappist order, the Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance, one of the stricter of Catholic monastic orders.

Merton spent the rest of his life at Gethsemani, only being free to undertake some travel towards the end of his life. The early years were a slow entrance into the Order, making temporary vows in 1944, solemn life vows in 1947, and ordained priest in 1949. For a time he had the significant responsibility as Master of Novices, training the novices who came into the Abbey. Throughout his life Merton had been drawn to write and although he struggled for a time to see how it fitted with his vocation as a monk it became a rich ministry. His autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* was published in 1948 and brought instant fame and led to a stream of people joining monasteries. He later felt it was too full of youthful idealism and his writing developed in many ways over the years. Merton wrote poetry, prose, journals, letters, articles, and books with a hunger to keep learning and developing his thinking. He is particularly known for his work on contemplative prayer, social concerns (particularly on war and race), monastic renewal, and Eastern religion. His ability to relate to the struggles of people in the contemporary world and articulate a spiritual, Christ-centered, way forward continue to inspire. In 1966, recovering from an operation, Merton met and fell in love with a student nurse. Although he struggled (successfully) to keep his vows, eventually Merton owned up to his superior and ended the relationship. Merton's life was both incredibly settled, living the routine of a monk, and yet vastly open to correspond and learn from people all over the world. His long interest in Eastern religion led to a trip to Thailand in 1968 where after speaking at a conference he retired to his room and was accidentally killed, electrocuted by an electric fan. He died twenty-seven years to the day after entering Gethsemani. Merton did not reflect in detail on charismatic renewal, although we have one recorded talk he gave after visits to his monastery from people involved in the Catholic charismatic renewal. Merton also corresponded with and met Kilian McDonnell who later was very involved in the Catholic charismatic renewal and a member of the Society for Pentecostal Studies.⁵⁰

50. Merton, "Pentecostalism"; Merton, *School of Charity*; McDonnell, *Charismatic Renewal and Ecumenism*; McDonnell, "Interview"; McDonnell, "Interview."

Both Watson and Merton share a spiritual journey in Christian faith entered into from more secular backgrounds. Both lived lives aware of the impact that Jesus had on them and with the desire to lead others into a deeper journey of faith. Their writings and lives both witnessed to many people who lived close to them and to others across the world. They were ordained and felt a deep call to serve the church in ways that challenged its existing practices. Both testify to the way God opened them up to receive from others very different to themselves in ways that deepened their own Christian faith. Familiar themes play out in both lives despite the many differences and rather than dwell on the latter in this work we seek to consider the common concern for renewal.

SHAPE OF RENEWAL FOR WATSON

Before we proceed to a detailed consideration of aspects of renewal it is important to gain a wider picture that places these within the overall thinking of Watson and Merton. This develops the outline of their lives and will enable a better appreciation of the detail in the coming chapters. St. Michael le Belfrey, York, remains a place of pilgrimage for those touched by the ministry of David Watson. Every week people join with the regular worshippers to remember with thanksgiving the role Watson had in bringing them to faith in Jesus or in renewing their faith.⁵¹ Lives changed through an encounter with Jesus were always at the heart of Watson's understanding of renewal. He remained an evangelist, even though his understanding of the evangelistic task departed from some prevalent at the time through his experience and thinking on renewal. I want to suggest that we can see this evangelist informed renewal being worked out in individual lives, in the life of local church communities and in the way Christians are called to live in the world.⁵² Watson's journey at university from a "cynical unbeliever" to a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" came out of an invitation to the evangelical Christian Union.⁵³ It was an explanation of the gospel of Jesus who overcame sin on the cross that made sense to Watson as he knelt before Jesus to acknowledge his sin, count the cost and put his faith and trust in him. Watson was motivated in evangelism from the start, leading his best

51. Discovered in conversation with Matthew Porter, current vicar at St. Michael's, who also stresses the importance of evangelism to Watson. Porter has written *David Watson*.

52. Here I am picking up on some the themes in Watson's life and thinking developed in Andy Lord, "Gospel Shaped Church."

53. Watson, *You Are My God*, 14,17.

friend and his mother to Jesus soon after his conversion. This gospel of Jesus is fundamental to understanding how the experience and understanding of renewal developed for Watson. He later placed this cross-focused message within a framework of God's kingdom in which Jesus is King and has authority over the entire world.⁵⁴

This desire for lives made anew placed against the reality of weakness and sin drove Watson to seek the renewing work of the Holy Spirit—"oh, for some fire of the Spirit!"⁵⁵ In this seeking after renewal the Scriptures and the history of the church were important to Watson. Acts and the history of revivals were of particular importance in affirming God's dynamic desire to pour out his Spirit in ways that changed lives. The Holy Spirit is seen as a gift of God to be received in faith and has a recognizable impact on life—not just the hidden working of the Spirit but also the specific and powerfully dramatic work. Watson shared with the prayer groups for revival that had grown around the UK a desire for a renewal that brought many to know Jesus for themselves.⁵⁶ He was later to say (and experience) that if a nearly empty church "preaches the simple Gospel of Christ, believes in the power of prayer and trusts in the Holy Spirit" then it would be "full in no time."⁵⁷ Watson described his personal renewal in terms of being filled with the Spirit in a way that made God more real to him.⁵⁸ In particular, it is described as an overwhelming in the love of Christ which brings new vitality, joy, and faith, as well as a hunger for the Scriptures and desire to witness.⁵⁹

How this personal renewal was to be lived out practically was given particular encouragement through Watson's later friendship with John Wimber. Wimber was also an evangelist and a church planter who founded the Vineyard movement from his concern for the gospel of the kingdom, discipleship and the power of the Holy Spirit. The practice of the gifts of the Spirit coupled with humility and the power of the Spirit to heal attracted Watson at a visit to Wimber's church.⁶⁰ Here was a move from theory to practice in renewal led by someone who had a deep love for people. A shared concern for training and discipleship was also important, with Watson seeing the church in the West as being so often ineffective because it

54. Watson, *I Believe in Evangelism*, 32–35.

55. Watson, *You Are My God*, 49.

56. On wider developments at this time see Hocken, *Streams of Renewal*, 70–103.

57. Watson, *You Are My God*, 74.

58. *Ibid.*, 58.

59. *Ibid.*, 60.

60. Watson, *Fear No Evil*, 52–53.

has “largely neglected what it means to be a *disciple of Christ*.”⁶¹ It is in the context of discipleship that Watson places his teaching on life in the Spirit, spiritual gifts, prayer, and spiritual warfare. Renewal does not negate the need for a disciplined life shaped around Christ as witnessed to in Scripture, but rather only makes sense in this context.

God’s call to discipleship comes with an unavoidable call to be part of the community of God’s family. The church is not a collection of individuals but comprised of those “born again by the Spirit into the family of God.”⁶² Renewal for Watson led him into ecclesiology, into ways of explaining the nature of the church that would enable churches to be renewed in their practical life and witness.⁶³ His experience of renewal meant that church leaders kept asking Watson how to lead their churches into renewal. Eventually “renewal weeks” were held to enable others to come to York to learn and experience what a renewed community might look like and be grown. Watson was also more deeply challenged to model such renewed community through extended households. His wife, Anne, suggested the development through sharing their home with others. The Watson family often had six or eight others living with them, starting each day with prayer and sharing finances, following the example of the church in Acts.⁶⁴ This model was copied by others in their church and, although far from easy for those involved, did facilitate a “rich sharing of lives together in Christ” that enabled a number of creative ministries to flourish.⁶⁵ Watson later suggested that renewal of church communities “must precede both evangelism and social action.”⁶⁶

Renewal of the church, for Watson, naturally results in social action. He was particularly concerned in the call to live a simple lifestyle in a world of great economic inequality.⁶⁷ This was a concern raised by evangelical leaders such as John Stott and Ron Sider in their desire not to separate evangelism from social transformation.⁶⁸ One result of prophetic guidance was the Mustard Seed project that developed an extended household based in a shop in York.⁶⁹ The aim was to demonstrate the kingdom of God within the

61. Watson, *Discipleship*, 16.

62. Watson, *I Believe in the Church*, 82–83.

63. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

64. Watson, *You Are My God*, 78, 114.

65. *Ibid.*, 126.

66. Watson, *I Believe in the Church*, 17.

67. Watson, *Discipleship*, 210–30.

68. Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*; Sider, *Evangelism and Social Action*.

69. Watson, *You Are My God*, 142–49.

wider social community, a witness that also brought Christians of different traditions together. Whilst this did not last, nor address many significant social issues, it pointed to the desire in Watson to link renewal with social engagement. It also drew on his increasing realization that renewal brings Christians of different traditions together. For Watson this was brought into focus at a conference for renewal at which he was speaking alongside Roman Catholics during which God challenged his attitudes to them.⁷⁰ He came to see that a spirit of repentance over church divisions would be needed if revival was to come. Renewal, reconciliation, ecumenism, and social concern increasingly came together in Watson's ministry, even as the evangelistic desire remained key.

The foundations for renewal overlapped with those for evangelism—the reality of sinful and suffering humanity; and the overflowing love of God by the Holy Spirit that advances the kingdom of Jesus. As a realization of sin brought Watson to Jesus at the cross, so personal suffering and confession of sin were key to his seeking and experiencing the filling of the Holy Spirit in his life. In considering the nature of the church, the present sinful reality points to the need for a constant renewal and re-shaping of the church in the light of the knowledge of the kingdom of God.⁷¹ Personal and church struggles remained a reality for Watson throughout his life—in his experiences of asthma, depression, and partial breakdown; and through the church split and divisions over women in leadership. Watson noted three stages in the narrative of any community: honeymoon, nightmare, and reality!⁷² Renewal presupposes sin and suffering that bring individuals and communities to face reality, and then to seek and know the outpouring of the Spirit of love. This is the biblical pattern of cross, resurrection, and Pentecost lived out in the realities of life within history. Renewal brought holistic transformation that lifted up the name of king Jesus that all might recognize and follow him.

This sketch suggests that for Watson renewal is rooted in the reality of sin and suffering, ever seeks more of the Holy Spirit that individuals, communities, denominations and the world might be transformed. Renewal is visible and communal, living in the gifts and fruit of the Spirit, encouraging a discipleship that enables the church to grow and draw others to Jesus.

70. *Ibid.*, 99.

71. Watson, *I Believe in the Church*, 51–52.

72. Watson, *You Are My God*, 163.

SHAPE OF RENEWAL FOR MERTON

In sketching Merton's approach to renewal it is worth noting that I first became aware of Merton's impact on monastic renewal when visiting the Cistercian monastery of Mount St. Bernard Abbey in Leicestershire. A monk in the bookshop was reminiscing about the 1950s when a huge influx of new monks arrived largely due to the influence of Merton's writing. It was the same in many monasteries across the US and UK, although there were other influences at work apart from Merton. I want to suggest that key to understanding Merton is the growth of a "prophetic and reforming mission" that developed out of his experience at Gethsemani.⁷³ He saw that the monastery was not serving the needs of the new monks in that it was too centralized and uniform in its approach, hindering individual growth. There was a need for a renewal of focus on the "monastic spirit," on "union with God," and this requires monasteries to experiment with new ways of being.⁷⁴ Some of these concerns developed from Merton's time as Master of Novices which came with significant training responsibilities and opportunities for experimentation. Merton later rooted such renewal in an understanding of the church as a "kind of Pentecost in miniature" which implies new life and change.⁷⁵ He saw a need for a Pentecost renewal of the institution and of the Cistercian tradition. This takes the best intentions and practices of the past and reworks them in ways that bring life to people today. Although some of his writing may be taken as a rejection of monastic life, overall Merton sought a renewal rather than an ending to monastic life. In many ways Merton's desire to renew monasticism and hence the church worked in parallel with the *ressourcement* movement in Roman Catholic theology that sought renewal through a return to the sources.⁷⁶ These two streams both paved the way for the radical work of Vatican II, which Merton saw as having the "stamp of the Holy Spirit on it."⁷⁷ This opened the door to deeper critical reflections on monasticism, with Merton arguing for a renewal of the heart and not just institutions.⁷⁸ In Merton we can see a desire for the spiritual renewal of the church through a fresh appreciation of tradition and engagement with the realities of contemporary life.

73. Bamberger, *Prophet of Renewal*, 30.

74. *Ibid.*, 49.

75. Merton, *Springs of Contemplation*, 17.

76. Dart, "Thomas Merton and *Nouvelle Theologie*"; Flynn and Murray, *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, 1.

77. Bamberger, *Prophet of Renewal*, 43; Merton, *Springs of Contemplation*, 40.

78. Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 5–11.

This approach to renewal naturally centered, for Merton, around the practice of contemplation and the re-establishment of the hermit tradition. Contemplation was a theme Merton kept returning to as he sought fresh ways to present its understanding and practice to the people of his time. It is this aspect of Merton's spirituality that remains attractive to many beyond monastic communities. The link he makes between contemplation and life is perhaps at the heart of his continuing relevance. Merton describes contemplation as "live itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness and for being."⁷⁹ It is an intimacy with God that recognizes the gift of God in each moment and responds to this.⁸⁰ In other words, contemplation involves ordinary lives lived in response to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ Such renewed lives are characterized by a vocation of freedom, the freedom to respond to God without restraint.⁸² Here is an approach to renewing spirituality that is accessible to all who desire life in all its fullness.

There is a personal focus to this and for Merton the real task of the Christian is "the renewal of the self, the 'new creation' in Christ."⁸³ This is a renewal in the way of freedom that requires detachment, conflict and transformation under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Here Merton often talks about the challenge to put off the illusions of the "false self" and be renewed in the reality of the "true self" that is at the heart of human identity.⁸⁴ There is no escape from the painstaking reality of our sinfulness and Merton often lays open his own faults for others to see and criticizes his earlier writing in the light of later insights. The sanctifying fire of the Holy Spirit is needed for complete inner change and conversion.⁸⁵ This is a transformation deeper into our true selves held within the love and mercy of God, a "continuous dynamic of inner renewal."⁸⁶ Here is a realistic spiritual journey in the world that is not for the fainthearted and yet offers the promise of peace and hope in everyday life, a life that culminates in the fullness of love.

Life, peace, and hope are attractive to individuals but are also themes relevant to renewal in the wider world. Merton, particularly during the

79. Merton, *New Seeds*, 13.

80. Merton, *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, 72; Merton, *New Seeds*, 21.

81. Merton, *Springs of Contemplation*, 45.

82. *Ibid.*, 31.

83. Merton, *Love and Living*, 192; Bamberger, *Prophet of Renewal*, 119–20.

84. Finley, *Palace*.

85. Merton, *New Man*, 24, 88.

86. Merton, *New Seeds*, 34; Bamberger, *Prophet of Renewal*, 120–21.

1960s, wrote prophetically about the world in which he lived and offered a challenge to live as nations in ways of peace and love rather than war and alienation. It has been suggested that he was granted a charismatic gift of prophecy that witnessed to the holiness of God in the world.⁸⁷ It is the charismatic gift that discerns the voice of God and enabled Merton to speak out without being stifled by the institution.⁸⁸ At a time when Roman Catholics didn't speak out on war and social issues, Merton risked speaking out with a deep passion.⁸⁹ Themes from his understanding of contemplation begin to be applied to the journey of the world. There is a need for the world to be transformed, not repudiated, and the "civic aspect of contemplative life" comes to the fore in Merton's later work.⁹⁰ Of course, care needs to be taken over what is taken as a prophetic stand, but Merton spoke words of "uncomfortable truth" to the systems of his day.⁹¹ We might suggest that Merton modelled a renewal of prophetic wisdom in and for the world.

It is important here to ask how such an approach to the renewal of the church, personal spirituality, and the world was grounded for Merton. I would suggest it is grounded in significant moments of his life and more subtly grounded in his theology. In the story of his conversion Merton points to the work of the Holy Spirit in enabling him to see the things of God.⁹² It was the Spirit of Love working through human friendships that led him gently towards faith in Jesus. Merton was drawn into the "immense and tremendous gravitational movement which is love, which is the Holy Spirit."⁹³ This again came to the fore in his ordination seen as an immersion in the divine charity of the Spirit.⁹⁴ Merton describes the days after the ordination as "full of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of God seemed to be taking greater and greater possession of all our souls."⁹⁵ The transforming work of the Spirit is notable at these times in Merton's life of faith and undergirds his vocation as a writer. He sees his writing as somehow a work of the Holy Spirit because of the honesty involved in opening his life up to others.⁹⁶ Mer-

87. Bamberger, *Prophet of Renewal*, 11–12.

88. Arcement, "In the School," i. Merton's writing was often censored and yet this did not stop him from speaking out.

89. Shannon. William, "Introduction," 9–10.

90. Rowan Williams, *Silent Action*, 57.

91. *Ibid.*, 66.

92. Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, 169, 177, 209–10.

93. *Ibid.*, 225.

94. Merton, *The Sign of Jonas*, 182.

95. *Ibid.*, 193–94.

96. Merton, *Intimate Merton*, 73.

ton saw his vocation in terms of having “a clear obligation to participate . . . in every effort to help a spiritual and cultural renewal of our time.”⁹⁷ Merton is concerned with the renewal of the whole person and this can be seen as arising from his experience of the Holy Spirit at work beneath all things, and notably at work drawing us into relationship with others and particular into the relationship between Jesus and the Father.

This sketch suggests that for Merton renewal is rooted in a pneumatology that is experienced in life. Renewal has the effects of transforming individuals, communities and indeed the world in love. Such a renewal is both life-affirming and yet also deeply critical and prophetic. Merton particularly addresses such renewal within monastic life, personal spirituality, and a world at war. At the same time his reflections address wider issues in Christian life, the church, and humanity. The approach here develops that of John Bamberger in its concern for the implications of renewal beyond the monastic and in terms of its emphasis on a pneumatological basis.⁹⁸

SUMMARY

This book is concerned with exploring the nature of Christian renewal, the work of the Holy Spirit in humanity that brings transformation and fresh life. The starting point for our study is David Watson, as representative of the charismatic renewal tradition. His understanding is then brought into dialogue with that of Thomas Merton, as representative of the monastic renewal tradition. This dialogue is then placed against the backdrop of wider renewalist scholarship—the Pentecostal-charismatic thinking that has developed greatly over the last forty years. This approach represents a charismatic approach to receptive ecumenism that is asking: “What can the charismatic tradition, represented by Watson, appropriately learn with integrity about renewal from the Roman Catholic tradition, represented by Thomas Merton?” As such this work extends and complements other approaches to developing the renewalist traditions. It picks up the challenge made by people such as Tom Smail in the 1970s and Mark Stibbe in the 1990s to deepen the understanding and broaden the scope of charismatic renewal.⁹⁹ Although covering a range of theological and practical topics this work aims at a more personal engagement with two writers rather than the

97. *Ibid.*, 184.

98. Bamberger, *Prophet of Renewal*.

99. Smail, *Reflected Glory*; Stibbe, “Theology of Renewal.”

great systematic introductions to renewal theology of J. Rodman Williams and, more recently, Amos Yong.¹⁰⁰

This book proceeds by utilizing the shapes of renewal outlined in the previous sections. For both Watson and Merton renewal is about a particular understanding of God and humanity and the way people are encouraged to encounter the triune God. Renewal is a journey of discipleship and transformation that is life-long and structured. This transformation has a personal aspect, with renewed spirituality; a communal reality in renewed church and monastery; and a world impact, with the desire for world transformation. It might be summarized as a holistic renewal in the Holy Spirit of love who transforms personally within a global setting. Within this global scope of renewal attention here is focused on the personal nature of renewal—the ways in which God transforms humanity through a process of renewal seen in a personal spirituality that relates to the world. The following chapters are therefore devoted to paying attention to God (chapter 2), humanity (chapter 3), to the process of transformation (chapter 4) and to how this works out in terms of everyday spirituality (chapter 5). Each of these chapters also develops an outline of a constructive theology of renewal that represents one transformation of the charismatic tradition. Finally, the things learnt are drawn together to suggest further developments for the future (chapter 6).

Given the rich availability of resources on renewal and the extensive writing and teaching of Watson and Merton this is a need to be selective in our engagement here. Watson wrote different kinds of materials: autobiography, books of teaching and evangelistic resources. Selections from each of these will be referred to in building up an understanding of renewal that is practical, biblical and theological. A focus on the transforming work of the Holy Spirit will guide this selection. This will also be the case for Merton who wrote more than Watson and in a variety of other forms. Significant and representative materials from Merton's writing will be consulted, without needing for our purposes here to cover everything.¹⁰¹ Space is given to reflect on this charismatic learning from Merton in the light of relevant studies by scholars involved in the renewalist research represented by the journals *Pneuma* and *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*.¹⁰² The aim here is to

100. J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology*; Yong, *Renewing*.

101. Over a hundred books by Merton are referred to in Shannon, Bochen, and O'Connell, *Merton Encyclopedia*. Reference to each goes beyond the bounds of this project, although relevant unpublished materials from the Merton Center at Bellarmine have been consulted.

102. On *Pneuma*, the journal of the Society of Pentecostal Studies, see <http://www.sps-usa.org/> and for *JPT* see <http://brill.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/brill/>

combine a tight focus with learning relevant to wider communities. Given the lack of study of Merton in terms of the Holy Spirit it is hoped that this study will also contribute to the wider Merton studies. Hence Merton's writing will be placed alongside some of these studies to give a clearer understanding of his work and where this present study fits in. When quoting from Watson and Merton we need to be aware that they were people of their time and often used the term "man" to include both men and women—particularly Merton who was often addressing monks who were all male. As this gets in the way of a contemporary reading I have edited accordingly for a more general audience.

As we proceed, may the Holy Spirit come in love to transform our minds and hearts. May we know the fresh renewing of God drawing us again close to Jesus to form us more in his image.

SAMPLE

pent. These encourage scholarship by Pentecostals and charismatics, but also engage with any writing with relevance to these and wider renewalist movements.