



RESOURCE

ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT
ACTIVE IN MISSION

Do you have memories to share from the history of Charismatic Renewal?

Charismatic History Project

Charting the history of renewal, and lessons learnt, to inform and encourage the church of today and tomorrow

In 2022, Bishop John Finney and Canon David MacInnes met for lunch. Both are now in their 90s and they reflected on their experience of charismatic renewal, and the extent to which the church has learnt from the triumphs and challenges that made such a significant impact from the 1960s onwards. Their discussions grew and developed to the point that a project has been established under the auspices of ReSource.

Whatever your age, are you passionate about the church learning lessons from its recent history?

Do you have memories to share about your experience of renewal, in the period 1960-2000?

Would you like to learn more...?

The Need

Many books have been written about the experience of particular individuals and churches but very few have sought to offer an overview of this period with a particular focus on the Church of England. It is timely to seek to do this whilst some of the earliest participants are still able to share their memories first-hand.

The Purpose

We seek not only to record history in both oral and written form, but most importantly to learn from it in a way that can inform and encourage the church of today and tomorrow. Thus we will seek to celebrate the good fruit, whilst also discerning the lessons learnt, the mistakes made along the way, and what we may have lost.

The Scope

One of the key characteristics of the early days of charismatic renewal was the breaking down of barriers and a sense of unity amongst Christians from different denominations and traditions. This will certainly feature in our research, but we are choosing to focus on the Church of England as the church we know best. The project covers 1960-2000 because that time frame covers the early days of the Fountain Trust and Anglican Renewal Ministries as well as John Wimber's ministry in the UK, and the Toronto Blessing. We hope to learn both from those who see themselves as charismatic, those who no longer identify in that way, and also sympathetic observers who, in Colin Buchanan's famous phrase, were never 'card-carrying'. Whilst our primary focus is the Church of England, we will be delighted to cooperate with others doing similar work elsewhere.



Governance

The research is being conducted by a Steering Group under the auspices of ReSource, with an Advisory Group chaired by Dr John Maiden of the Open University.

The Advisory Group is ecumenical and provides academic rigour and wisdom to the project. Its members are Dr John Maiden, Rev Dr Andrew Atherstone, Dr Uta Balbier, Rt Revd Graham Cray, Canon Paul Harcourt, Revd Dr Ian Randall.

The members of the Steering Group are Rt Revd John Finney, Canon David McInnes, Rev Alan Bing, Rev Dr Christopher Landau, Canon Dr John Lawson, Rev Andrew Crook, and Canon Felicity Lawson.

Methodology

To test out if this was a worthwhile project we began by inviting people to contact us, via ReSource, with their memories and willingness to contribute to this research and talked with many individuals. Their responses encouraged us to continue, and we have now established a structure for the project.

1. Oral history interviews have been conducted under the training and oversight of Dr John Maiden in spring 2023 and further interviews will be used as a follow up.
2. A pilot written questionnaire was sent to 40 people and was found to be satisfactory. A wider distribution of this questionnaire will be undertaken in 2024.
3. Witness Seminars hosted by ReSource have been held in autumn 2023 and more are planned for 2024. These have explored both historical and theological aspects of the renewal and have been widely welcomed.
4. We are gathering an archive of written material from Anglican Renewal Ministries, other sources and individuals.
5. We have made contact with other organisations linked with charismatic renewal e.g. New Wine, On Fire, HTB networks; denominational renewal agencies.

What next?

The project is continuing to evolve, but we envisage the following potential outputs:

1. One or more publications recording not only the history but reflecting on the relevance of this for the church today, and exploring the development of different aspects within the Renewal. Our current thinking includes areas such as theological understanding; personal encounter and transformation; development and change within local churches; denominational impact; the gifts of the Spirit; healing ministry; liturgy and worship; evangelism and church planting; social engagement, and doubtless others...
2. Zoom and in-person events hosted by ReSource sharing insights from the research and inviting ongoing discussion.
3. A series of podcasts.
4. A residential conference to reflect on some of the outcomes of the research is being planned for autumn 2024 for current church leaders and others. Further conferences are envisaged.
5. An opportunity for leaders to reflect on their experience and practice in a more extended way (similar to the Changing Church course of the late 1980s-early 1990s) is being considered.
6. Oral histories and questionnaires together with the archive material will, with permission, be made accessible to other researchers.

*If you would like to learn more, or keep in touch
with developments, please email
historyproject@resourcingrenewal.org
or call 01952 371300*