# Renewal Streams, Prophetic Structures and Asia's Urban Poor

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New Zealand is a rich industrialized country of 3 million Pakeha , Maori and Samoans collectively called Kiwis . In the past, 1 person in 300 have been missionaries despite only 12% regularly attendant churches each Sunday.

it began rumbling about 20 years ago, a small stream that has cascaded and grown to a river of nationwide renewal with possibilities of it turning into revival.

I am just a beaten-up missionary who returned a couple of years ago, after a few years in Manila's slums. God spoke to me in a vision, through a prophetess from up the road and in his word, that he would raise up a movement of missionaries into the slums of Asia's megalopolises. Not knowing any of the influential men, I just wandered on my motorbike and shared with friends. The Spirit directed in unusual ways and out of it became a new mission – and sevral older ones expanded to the urban poor. For he was directing us at a critical time when hundreds of young believers had been touched by the Holy Spirit with zeal for missions.

Renewal has resulted in thousands of new converts and all the miracles, signs and gifts of a miraculous God. There seems to have been four phases. The first is a phase of brokenness, humbling, and seeking the Lord that led many of the countries present spiritual leaders into a knowledge of God's power resulting in new patterns of Kiwi - style worship and the exercise of spiritual gifts.

The second phase is restructuring of traditional church life - house groups develop. Deep relationships and spiritual ministry to their personal needs occur. A new pattern of evangelism flows through normal social relationships and multiplies new believers. At this point, structural transformation of leadership patterns often emerge. Dead deacons’ courts became transformed into bands of elders functioning each in prophetic, healing, pastoral, evangelistic roles etc., based on the exercise of spiritual gifts. House group leadership continued to provide an environment and means for the development of such men and women -and of potential missionaries.

The third phase is an outward one, involving commitments to simple lifestyle, to the poor. After about four to six years of renewal in a church, or after the birth of a new church, scores of the first generation converts develop an eagerness to be involved in missions and have developed many of the necessary skills. Hundreds upon hundreds volunteered for the field last year. 700 signed up for YWAM’s DTS. Eight hundred attended a week-long celebration of missions. Also, Bible schools are bursting their seams.

There have been different responses structurally to the renewal in each of the five mainline Protestant denominations. The Brethren cast out their charismatic people. They proceeded to establish charismatic brethren-style fellowships (these expanded the Apostolic and New Life Pentecostal streams). These have had a deep evangelistic inroad into the alternative lifestyle communities particularly around the Hawkes Bay, and a deep commitment to community and simple lifestyle with a strong sense of preparing for the imminent last times. There is a strong mission's vision to go and reach the Jews of the promised land in preparation for the Lord's return.

The Anglicans have always had an Infinity of available structures and renewal has been enfolded into the upper class mainstream of the church. Their youth-based Church Missionary Society, though benefiting from the renewal lost its earlier flexibility.

The Presbyterians with notable exceptions have been structurally trapped by the clarity of Calvin's doctrine on church structure. Renew touched many in churches but this did not result in structural change of eldership, often made up of a mixture of committed Christians and those without serious conversion.

The Methodists with a few exceptions have lost the authority of the word, so continued to be relatively unaffected by renewal and slowly die.

Amongst the Baptist, renewal has resulted in effective local church reformation, and in the past year this has begun to capture the denominational structures. A spirit of celebration marks the formerly dry annual National Assembly. A large percentage of the pastors of the renewed and growing churches have grown to leadership through church-planting.

The Catholic charismatic movement while small, has raised up significant groups of laymen Out of whom are coming many volunteers for third world assignments.

The Pentecostals whilst growing, and having contributed to the early phases of renewal, have largely been locked out of the renewal by their own structures and doctrines. The missions thrust tends to be single church. And they suffer from frequent leadership traumas although there may be a growing interdependence occurring periods.

The new surge of enthusiasm then is across the board, church-based, and youth culture / Kiwi culture in style. Unlike former movements it is not predominantly student-lead.

What channels, and culverts are available to channel this sudden torrent into long-term church-planting missions? Whilst experiencing growth, many of the traditional societies are viewed as cut off from the ethos of the youth culture. They are seen as institutional rather than communal; structural rather than relational or familial; cut off from the dynamic of a fast-moving Holy Spirit. But they are increasingly responsive to change.

YWAM has been the mission most clearly related to the ethos of renewal and strategically positioned to gather volunteers. Many mission leaders would question their lack of commitment to culture and to long-term church-planting and a large number of pastors are offended by their refusal to consult the churches on personnel but size speaks for their effectiveness in recruiting.

It is in this context that many pastors have been looking for a church-based renewal-generated prophetically-led long-term oriented church planting mission to the world's poor and particularly to the poor of Asia. The youth had been looking for a vision to the hardest areas to the poor committed to simple lifestyle and to community.

Unknown to myself, my years in Manila incarnated these values. God's prophetic call to raise up a movement was matched by his call to an older couple who were able to sense the church-based components. Within a year, the first team of trained workers are living in Manila's squatter areas studying language and culture. Support groups and New Zealand wide leadership are functioning. 25 others are in church-based ministry training. Prophets have spoken independently in a variety of places speaking of Asia's urban poor as the thrust of mission for the next years. Our role has been to follow behind the Lord and provides structure to facilitate his workings.

Will more structures emerge? Will the economic base sustain the enthusiasm? Is there sufficient modelling in the church life to provide a pattern for the early years of church planting? Will significant missionary training structures develop out of the older ethos or would new ones emerge? Will the stream that became a river reache the place of God's call and full flow or peter out into short-term eddies?

The above are a participant’s observation and are open to correction.

Viv Grigg, April 1984